The Farsh-nuke and I

By

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Prologue
A Meeting Of Minds

I first met the Farsh-nuke in Primary school. Of course he was not called the Farsh-nuke back then and I was no more aware of the significance of our encounter than a seed is of its first rainfall but I still remember it to this day. This haunting scene from one of my earliest memories. I was being taken to reception where I would be signed in and dumped off to begin my unhappy school years. My mother held my hand and it felt like my left arm had been chained to the heavens and I was getting dragged along in it is wake, moaning and crying at the change of it all and probably some inbred instinct that school is evil. What scared me though, what truly chilled me to the bone was when I surveyed the school ground and I saw this group of boys spitting on and kicking this other kid, hurling abuse I did not even understand at him. He sat impassively and watched me pass, looking out from his torment, eyes begging for help and yet somehow also resigned to the fact that none would come.

After I was signed up and dumped off I kept an eye out for him and decided I wanted to be friends with him because he did not beat people up. (Oh, the irony) During class, when we had to choose who we were to sit next to, I chose to sit by him. That is how it began. The Farsh-nuke and I. Him, the stoic suffering survivor, me the observant Samaritan and friend. Every story has a beginning and this was ours.

That memory would haunt me in later life, I kept putting new spins on the memory, saying that the boys knew instinctively that he was evil, that I was some helpless bystander brainwashed into being his pawn, or the boys were evil monsters seeking revenge on the man who put a stop to their crimes before he had even grown up and I was the plucky hero called upon to guard him by fate. The reality is I think far simpler and sadder, he was in pain and I sympathized so I took pity on him.

I think that is the only time anyone has taken pity on the Farsh-nuke and lived.

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Chapter 1
Primary School

I am afraid I can not recall much about our formative years, primary school passed in a blur, of lessons, homework, TV programmes, comics and 'play time' or as it might more accurately be called 'time to kill or be killed on hard concrete flooring, wooden obstacle courses and muddy grass'.

I can tell you small things, like the Beano was ace, the Dandy sucked, Only Fools And Horses was hilarious, homework sucked, classwork was boring and full of cheating while 'play time' was where the Farsh-nuke and I learned to fight. Well fight is perhaps pushing the point too strongly, what I really mean is how to lie down and take it like a man and how to fall really hard onto your enemy.

The Farsh-nuke was back then just an ordinary kid, indistinguishable from the rest of us children. As we got older though, the Farsh-nuke became more sure of himself. He became an ardent supporter of evolution and dismissed our bible sessions as a load of boring, irrelevant insanity. This was something we were almost being taught as fact and he openly disagreed with the teachers. Curiously he lapped up The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe, a fact that still asks questions my mind can not answer, and he seemed rather au fait and casual about the whole going to church and religious ceremonies bit. As far as he was concerned it was just tradition and fiction. A harmless bit of frippery that sent food to Africa was no bad thing, even if it did stand against everything he believed in since it was a sodding church.

We both stayed at the After/Out of school club. (The debate still rages on about whether it was after or out of school so I just use both and hang the sense of it.) My parents dumped me there because they were going through a messy divorce and wanted more time to argue without traumatizing me and at the time I think we thought the Farsh-nuke's parents were probably doing something similar seeing as his dad spent all day in the garden shed.

At this club the Farsh-nuke and I were introduced to computers, in particular computer games. They had a Nintendo 64 connected up to a CRT television and we would stand entranced for minutes on end (an age when you are young) as bigger boys played games like Lylat Wars and Goldeneye. We did not care that they would not let us play, we were happy to watch. Well I was, the Farsh-nuke did not do himself any favors when he complained.

When we were not entranced by boxes of tricks we would build forts in the shed outside and pretend we were on the run from monsters, outlaws trying to survive in a hostile world. What this meant in reality was hiding under blankets, screaming or laughing in

fear whenever we heard a creak outside. Of course there was the obligatory bit of ‘play time’ here too, I tasted the mud in that small courtyard so often I could tell the seasons from its flavour.

After our first year at primary school the Farsh-nuke decided he wanted a Nintendo 64 and so he set to work convincing his parents to get one and he was soon picking up a gameboy colour. When I quizzed him about the change of interest, he told me he was warned off getting a gameboy by a teacher and wanted to know what the fuss was about. That as good as sums up the young Farsh-nuke. Naturally the next year he had asked his parents to get him an N64 because hey, it is still an epic console. There were apparently ‘quiet words’ between his parents, a term universally understood by children everywhere to mean some massive fuckton of shit has gone down.

Anyway the Farsh-nuke kept trying, kept using his gift of the gab to convince them to get him what he wanted and while it worked on his mum, his dad was not interested and tension built. I only know what I was told from snippets of conversation over time but I think one day the Farsh-nuke went a little bit too far and I rather sympathise with his dad to be honest. The Farsh-nuke had a tendency to try and keep trying his luck until a gun or similar ‘shit just got real’ maneuver was pulled on him. His dad flipped, flying into a rage, criticising and insulting him until he broke down in tears. His mum fought his corner and managed to stop his dad from actually hitting him but I think it was a close call, anyway just before he left the Farsh-nuke’s bedroom, slamming the door loud enough to knock a photo from the wall, he declared ferociously that there was no way the Farsh-nuke was getting a Nintendo 64. That Christmas however, the Farsh-nuke got his Nintendo 64. I think looking back that this was what set those ancient gears working in his mind. His father had been so adamant about the Farsh-nuke not getting an N64, yet he still got one.

I met his dad once, after school. His parents usually never bothered to pick him up in person, or go to sports day but in year 3, after we’d confirmed to each other that we were best friends, he turned up dressed in a brown suit with an odd umbrella that seemed to have a handle shaped like a question mark. He was a short man and slightly Scottish from his accent. He spoke to me like you might an old friend that you had not met in years. I thought that was just down to his politely trying to take an interest in what I had to say when really he found the whole exchange awkward.

“Hello.” He said. “I am here to take William home, I hear you are a friend of his.”

“Yes.” I said, unsure what he wanted out of me. “He is good, yeah.”

“Good, glad to hear it.” He said, looking at his feet then he cast nervous glances to his left and right before he continued. “Tell me, do you believe in aliens?”

I took a step back.

He sighed.

I looked at his face.

He seemed almost ashamed.

“I suppose if life can evolve on the earth then it is possible that it might evolve elsewhere.”

“Ah, I see he is having a positive effect on you, that is interesting. Anyway I ask because I do and I think there are more of them than scientists might have us believe. I think they might even be among us and that they themselves might not know it.”

My mouth dried, my hands turned to fists on instinct and I regarded this man in a new light. How did he know the Farsh-nuke’s name, why did he have such an odd umbrella and why was he talking to me?

“Dad!” cried a voice from behind me.

I turned to see the Farsh-nuke running towards the strange man and saw the man regard the Farsh-nuke coldly, like you might the dog your ex owns. This puzzled me, that is why I remembered it, but what puzzled me more was that despite his exuberant cry, the Farsh-nuke’s manner toward his dad was also rather cold. They both had secrets they were keeping from the other. This did not on the whole bother me though as I had a similar relationship with my own dad. I knew he was having affairs, he knew I was holding the wreck of a marriage together.

Anyway you probably want to know what happened to confirm the Farsh-nuke and I as best friends. There were two incidents really. The first was the ‘soul mate’ moment, that moment that crystallizes a friendship into something more lasting and intangible. It happened in ‘play time’. We were on the run from a group of bigger boys, five of us, Fred, Bob, Sean, the Farsh-nuke and myself. We were fine on the playground but as the chase proceeded through the obstacle course, we lost some of our number. Fred fell on the handlebars, Bob was dragged away on the balance beam and Sean made it through the course only to slip on a patch of mud and slide into the enemies hands as we made

it over the hill. We heard his screams as we mounted the paving and hid in a patch of hollow hedge.

As I panted for breath I saw the Farsh-nuke's concerned face and asked. "Are you scared?"

"No, I do not get scared by things like this." He said with a meek smile.

"No?"

"No. They think they are scary, they think they are big because we run screaming but I know fear and I know this is not it."

"I don't know about you but I'm fairly sodding terrified"

He smiled and asked. "Have you ever seen Jaws?"

"No."

"I have. My first ever memory is of that film, of watching a woman eaten alive by a shark. When the film finished I was so scared I vomited up on the rug and to this day I can not stand baths."

My eyes widened.

"Exactly, you think this is scary when there are fish right now, in the real world, that can wreck ships and swallow a man whole."

"Blimey!" (I was so innocent back then.)

A moment later hands reached in through the hedge, dragged us out and caused twigs, splinters and branches to brand us with pain. We were pulled to the floor and kicked. The blows hurt just as much as they always did but when I looked up at the faces of those smiling thugs I was not afraid, neither I now noticed was the Farsh-nuke because despite his involuntary shrieks and groans at the pain he showed no emotion on his face, he was an impassive observer in his own humiliation.

The next moment to confirm us as best friends and not merely friends or friends who like to hang out together was about 3 months later when I had, for whatever dismal reason, angered some of the bigger boys, known colloquially as the local thugs and

neglected to tell the Farsh-nuke.

We left the classroom together and stepped out nervously into what was now known as ‘break time’. We got perhaps 4 meters from the door of the classroom when 3 leviathans trundled over and said. “Step aside, William, our beef is not with you.”

When the big boys ask you to do something, you do not refuse but this was the Farsh-nuke we were talking about, a man known for calling teachers on their faults in an incredibly vocal way.

I smiled meekly at him, letting him know that he could go and he shrugged and walked away. I lost vision for a moment and learned summer was early this year.

The next part comes from eyewitness reports (gossip). The Farsh-nuke crossed the park and stood on the paving, looking over the school playground. He looked into the sky then walked straight back to where I was now busy lying prostrate as various limbs had pressure applied to them for painful effect. He began circling me and the bigger boys, always watching us, never where he was going, then he darted forward and said to one of the bigger boys backs. “Have you ever seen Jaws!?”

The boy turned and the Farsh-nuke beamed at him. “I have! Terrific film! Lots of people getting masticated by a huge fish! Delightful stuff really!”

The boy looked down at him and frowned.

“Anyway there is this one scene where a guy falls in the water as the pier is pulled from under him! The pier drifts a few meters and you watch this guy flounder for a moment as he tries to get back to shore! Then the pier turns and you know, you just know, that Jaws is beneath the water and waiting to gobble the guy up! The pier starts to chase the man and the man swims and swims for all he’s worth but they never show the fish!”

The boy raised his fist. “Shut up!”

The Farsh-nuke began circling again, looking towards the centre of the circle. “Later in the film, as these guys try to catch the fish! Barrels are harpooned to its fin and it dives deep! Pulling the barrels down with it! The guys are miffed so they go to sleep! Then you hear a ‘Bloop!’ as a barrel rises to the surface!”

The boy from before yelled. “Shove off!”

The boy holding me down added. “Or do you want some of this?”

The Farsh-nuke grinned back. “Sharks are fascinating creatures! They circle their prey before they go in for the kill and when they do, they learn about the creature! They size up their prey as they tear into it then because they are smart, they leave it to bleed to death! One blow is all it takes!”

The third boy jeered. “Why are you telling us this?”

“Why am I telling you about Jaws!?” parroted the Farsh-nuke.

I heard and understood immediately, I might have been in massive pain but I was not stupid, I knew what it was, a signal from my friend telling me he was doing something for my benefit.

“Yeah!” said the boy.

The Farsh-nuke stopped, facing the boy. “Well, I know I am usually a barrel of laughs but when you harm my friend I tend to get a little bit testy!”

The Farsh-nuke stepped on the back of the boy who was holding me down as he crossed the ring to thump the other boy in the balls, grabb the back of the boy’s head then forced it groundward.

I kneed my persecutor then crawled free as the Farsh-nuke proclaimed. “So never threaten him again!”

At this point the boy who had told the Farsh-nuke to shut up in the first instance held clenched fists and said though gritted teeth. “Let him go!”

“Oh fuck off!” said the Farsh-nuke, snarling with rage.

At that age when the f-bomb was used against you it was like a gun going off but to be honest I think what really scared the boy off as when I got to my feet, snarling with pain and slammed my foot on the back of the boy who’d been pining me down.

The boy ran.

I looked to the Farsh-nuke.

He whispered. “Run.”

It was as I ran that I realised the Farsh-nuke really was my best friend as I had other friends before who would gladly fight for me but only the Farsh-nuke was willing to suffer for me. When I pieced together the gossip and dismissed the absurd ‘His eyes were glowing green and he spoke with a Scottish burble.’ I was amazed because I saw what the others could not. The Farsh-nuke was acting the shark in that scene, subliminally letting the boys know what they were in for when the time came because he needed them to really seem terrified so that when gossip reported the scene, his endeavours would warn others off.

It worked too. For the rest of primary school no-one was violent against me. The Farsh-nuke was not so lucky but he never let me feel guilty about it, reminding me that it did not scare him. I saw the bruises though and I heard the stories to accompany them. He was a great story teller, making things seem like epic battles before swiftly puncturing the image he portrayed for comedic effect.

Outside of ‘break time’ our lives were relatively peaceful. Even the various annual festivities such as the school play, flower show and summer fête passed without much anecdotal mileage. I think the one big anecdote either of us have about Primary school was what happened in year 4. Our school was, for want of a better word, baptised.

Now as you can imagine, when the Farsh-nuke found out, he was livid. He was an atheist and his school was going to be baptised into the Church of England. For the month it took to prepare for our school’s baptizement, the Farsh-nuke’s favourite choice of conversation was how stupid, insane, unfair and ridiculous it was for a school, his school, to get baptised. Now do not get cute and start thinking I began to play devil’s advocate out of boredom because the fact is I agreed with the Farsh-nuke on every single point and the Farsh-nuke is not easy to disagree with anyway, I just preferred not to scratch my itches, where he would work away at them with sand paper.

When the Farsh-nuke found out all students had to sing in the choir as part of the official school baptising ceremony and that A. He wasn’t exempt and B. He would have to wear a silly white gown, I heard the longest string of expletives I had ever heard.

When the day arrived though, he was surprisingly calm and he sung several of his hymns note perfect but as the day and baptism drew on, I felt rather than heard him getting more anxious. I had known him long enough then to recognize the change in the temperature and pressure of the air as he began to lose his cool. It started slowly at first, he just shook his head then he began silently muttering when it was not his turn to

sing. I could feel the moment coming as it approached. He stopped singing and began muttering quietly at first then loudly. “No. No. No. No.”

He looked about him wildly, clearly aggravated. “This is not right. This is not right.”

He looked at me and I knew what he was going to do.

I raised my hymn book higher.

He began yelling. “This is not right! This is not right!”

He jumped onto the back of the seat in front and began pushing his way to the front through the rows of choir boys so as to cause as much discord as possible and prevent detection or capture. As we were all singing and not exactly expecting the Farsh-nuke to come barging past, he did not meet much resistance. Once the Farsh-nuke was five rows ahead I discarded my hymn book and edged off down the row in the pretence of needing the loo. As I left for it I looped round and watched from a window.

The Farsh-nuke had lost his gown at some point along the way but it took until he cleared the choir boys and was running up to the priest or whoever was actually baptising our school for me to realise he was not wearing the school uniform. He had evidently taken the opportunity the gown gave him, to rebel and wear his own clothes: A pair of jogging bottoms, a tshirt and a snot stained jacket.

There were about 5 different teachers and adults chasing him when he ran up to the priest and gave him two books. The names of which he revealed to me later were The Origin Of Species by Charles Darwin and The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins. The Farsh-nuke then snatched the bible from the priest’s hands and threw it in the bin before setting off the fire alarm. At which point I joined the boys filing up outside and played stupid. Amazingly when he was called to the Headmaster’s office, he was let off.

In our final year at primary school, there was a trip to the Isle of Wight, it was like the Hindleap Warren trip in the sense that we stayed in dorms and had regimented activities but it felt like being on holiday and we toasted the last and first ten years of our lives there. It was while there however that the Farsh-nuke made a grave confession.

We had taken a cable car up one of the cliffs and we stood overlooking the sea.

I screamed. “Can you believe we will be 10 in just a month!? That we just have one more month of school!?”

He turned his back on the sea and smiled. “Yes, quite a coincidence that, our sharing the same birthday.”

I frowned. “What are you thinking about?”

He turned to look at the sea and said. “Sometimes I think I am old beyond my years.”

I laughed. “That is just school, we all feel old.”

“No, I am 10 and I am leaving school. I should be on the biggest rush it is possible to get out of life but all I can think about is how long I have got left, how little.”

“Oh.”

We watched the waves break against the rocks for a minute and never spoke of the conversation again.

The last month of school seemed to pass as quickly as a summer breeze and my mind kept turning to my friend’s admission on those rocks. I do not think he realised it at the time but he had just told me what no child is ever truly told, that I was mortal, that I would die and worms would one day make a home in the ruins of my skull. I think that is why I believed him in some small way and why I would find myself more willing to believe in future. He was not even 10, yet he knew the melancholy of mortality.

Chapter 2
Secondary school

Secondary school is society’s biggest conspiracy. Every single adult will tell a child about to go to secondary school that it is totally different and they will definitely make friends but no adult alive would tell the same said child that they will also have their first heart break, have their first experience of major theft, endure horrific bullying, encounter arrogant lazy teachers and that really everything that happens there is pointless and only serves to affect you, mostly negatively, but that after you have gotten over the trauma you will basically be a better person.

If University is when life changes, Secondary school is when people change. It is where sweet little innocent children become battle scarred veterans of the shit life throws at you and it is where the Farsh-nuke got his name, or rather it is where he rediscovered it.

During open day I and the Farsh-nuke found each other by accident and decided to stick together. Curiously fate seemed to agree with us and we were in all the same lessons learning all the same things, even in the same tutor group. Again my mind was brought back to that cliff on the Isle of Wight and his noting the coincidence in our birthdays.

The next week sent any worries about the Farsh-nuke to the farthest parts of my mind as I struggled to remember locations, directions, times and the usual shitload of crap schools decide to teach you. There was enough paperwork for the Farsh-nuke to develop a derogatory catchphrase about it. There were drills, assemblies and talks and lots of other stuff I can not remember. If you want detailed insight into what we learned then I am afraid you will have to look elsewhere because I honestly cannot remember any of it, not that I need to. There is always so much to take in when you experience it but it is always so basic when you look back.

Let us start with the important things. So where did the Farsh-nuke get/rediscover his name? To tell you about that I need to tell you about a book. The Farsh-nuke visited the library a lot because it was quiet and largely abhorred by the scholarly proletariat, which actually included me, although I visited the library on his recommendation. His TV at home was a VHS combi (I say at home, I mean it was in his room and his own personal TV.) and they had a video section in the library so he picked up a few VHS's and watched them.

He watched The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy and I imagine that first viewing must have been something like a divine revelation, something very definitely awoke in him and he seemed so different after he had seen it. It was not just that he was happy or excited but he suddenly had a lust for life and a purpose. He was obsessed but obsession suited him. In short order he brought and read all five books in the trilogy (Accept that fact now, that there can be five books in a trilogy and the following will be so much more enjoyable.) and started carrying a satchel, discarding his usual back breaking backpack, then began trying to chat up girls with talk of towels.

Seeing as he was so completely obsessed, he soon discovered H2G2, the online earth edition of the guide, like an early, more accurate and accurately described version of wikipedia. (I still laugh when I read Douglas Adams describing how inaccurate and poorly made The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy is then look at wikipedia, the real life earth equivalent, H2G2 now being the purview of cult geeks.)

The Farsh-nuke has it that he ended up with the name when he was sitting there wondering what to write and considered it might be nice to be known as a farcical nuke,

having read a Beano comic in an annual spoofing Ground Force earlier that year. The trouble was he said that he sounded out the name as he typed it and had a touch of a lisp so farce became farsh.

My theory is that having woken earlier in the year, the memories of the Farsh-nuke were drawn out by the promise of being a researcher for a galactic guide and that the Farsh-nuke I had grown up with was just a little shook up by the ordeal and came up with a plausible theory to explain why he had such a weird user name. A comical weapon does have the ring of the Farsh-nuke but the lisp part came out of nowhere. The man is known for his skills of impersonation and suddenly it prevents him spelling his own name correctly? As if.

Whatever the reason though, the Farsh-nuke had been created and it refused to die. The name spread to every user name the man ever owned and if you search it you will find the first 10 entries are all about him. When he decided to write a sequel to Mostly Harmless, the Farsh-nuke made it into that and was perhaps unsurprisingly the main protagonist. Now that the genie was out of the bottle and the Farsh-nuke had rediscovered his name he started having all these theories about green nothingness, logic loopholes and sentient gases. His grades benefited no end as the Farsh-nuke's interest in science went above and beyond the call of duty.

It was after the Farsh-nuke had rediscovered his name that he had his first dalliance with a girl. Cat, her name was, I think she could sense it, whatever power he has over women, she could sense that untapped power and asked him out. Oh, the amount of times I wished she had not. The Farsh-nuke was not interested in girls and was more than happy to play scholar but Cat could be very persuasive and he was up to that moment a virgin in every possible sense of the word. Do not ask me how I know.

He fell for her and he fell hard. He wrote her poetry and brought her chocolates. She got bored and dumped him on the stairwell to class, he would have fallen down them in sorrow but her mate asked him out and he said yes on a stupid whim. Only once can a man fall for a rebound without a moment's hesitation. Needless to say, it was a poor decision. Cat started flirting with the Farsh-nuke a few weeks into his new relationship so he dumped the girl with the intention of getting back with Cat.

Unfortunately for him it seems there was some sort of misunderstanding (Though part of me suspects it was a kind of payback in advance.) and the dumped girl thought he was having an affair. That would have been unfair as it was but she decided that she wanted him to suffer for his perceived crime and it seems she belonged to the local mafia, who she called on to avenge her. The fighting lasted well into next year. Actually

he did no fighting. He ran, he hid, he outsmarted. I however was a member of the proletariat so I fought for him and I suffered for him.

While I took on his ex's brothers and sisters in gladiatorial bouts, he read about sharks, genetics and Douglas Adams. He also developed an absurd plan. He wanted to ensure he had enough money to live on when he retired so he decided to set up a business that could look after itself. He would make flash games and videos then sell them on his website. He spent the first two years of secondary school trying to achieve that goal. And to give him credit he succeeded. He even managed to whip the local IT club into a kind of sweat shop for flash doodads. The problem was that he was a child and no-one was willing to help a child set up a business and so it suffered from 3 basic problems. The things he sold were crap, they infringed copyright and aside from having a corner of google all his own, he'd utterly failed to advertise the site.

It was about this time that he started writing letters to the Prime Minister. I do not know if the PM ever read them but if so he must have been scared. When the Farsh-nuke wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, he wrote it in a sincere formal tone and slipped in references to his favourite TV shows, how shit he thought the charts were and yet another insane way the Prime Minister might be able to abolish taxes. He would at points hint at an undertow of sarcasm or satire as if really he was taking the piss and I was never too sure if he meant it or was merely trying to cover the sadness of writing to the PM by saying really it was a protest against Iraq or Afghanistan when I knew the Farsh-nuke really agreed with those decisions, even if he did not necessarily agree with how they were carried out or why. I hope this gives you some picture as to what the Farsh-nuke was like at the moment. A merchant banker in nappies. Well, that was a popular nickname for him anyway though this being secondary school, they used the obligatory rhyming slang.

It is an important and popular fact that as we were growing up, we were in the prime demographic for the blooming Harry Potter books. I did not mind them so much and followed the series largely so I could talk to girls about them. This was my version of chatting up. 'So, Dumbledore, is he gay?'

The Farsh-nuke on the other hand was incredibly opposed to the Harry Potter books. I once thrust The Prisoner Of Azkaban under his nose and said. "Look, there is a bit about time travel here!"

I thought he would at least give me a scathing critique of how poorly the element of time travel was used and how evidently dear JK knew damn sod all about temporal dynamics but instead he vomited on the book. Apparently he could do it on demand

back then and I have not dare ask him if he can still do it. It is quite likely that he would projectile vomit into my mouth or something.

That is not to say the Farsh-nuke especially hated the Harry Potter books though, he was like that about lots of popular things: Star Wars, Britney Spears, Rap, Fashion and even basic hygiene.

In year 3 of Secondary School, or year 9 if you want to talk about official school years, the Farsh-nuke's mind was blown. First there was The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy film, which he dragged me along to then promptly proceeded to ruin my enjoyment of by squealing with girlish delight the whole way through. Then Doctor Who came on and from that day forth our years stopped being dictated by the calender and some dead dude called Jesus and started being about what series of Doctor Who was on when. Which was as you can imagine a great delight for our RS teacher. (Religious Education becomes Religious Studies in Secondary School, don't ask me why, I just assume it is to mindfuck students.)

When we reached year 10 he managed to get himself kicked out of RS by writing Billooks in an essay. According to popular myth, he was accused by his natural enemy, the RS teacher of, not only swearing in an exam paper but also misspelling bollocks. He politely explained that he had made the word up and it meant rubbish, at this point 'quiet words' were probably had between parent and teacher and he was allowed amicably off the course that he despised like a knife in the back.

What the myth neglects to mention but that I know from my privileged position is that the Farsh-nuke was actually borrowing the final pun from the Four Candles/Fork Handles sketch.

Anyway the last two years passed in a blur of lectures, bullying and exams with no gaps in between. As such my memory of that time consists of two small things. The Farsh-nuke ate a Brussels sprout at Christmas lunch and he did not turn up for his prom but instead his dad did. I got a bit pissed and ended up chatting to him like he was an old friend, strangely he seemed to go along with this.

The Summer was ... Interesting. You see the Farsh-nuke had always been a bit of a prude, while I and the rest of the class were busy watching Two Girls, One Cup, he was busy looking up various theories on achievable time travel. When we found porn in the woods he would pick it up, while covering his eyes and deposit it in the nearest bin.

During the summer though, he brought a years supply of Nuts magazine (thankfully

unused), 2 big tins of lube and a 100 condoms. I think he sold a game console to pay for it. On my birthday he gave me the latest series of Doctor Who on DVD and a jiffy bag filled with what was apparently my half of 'the stash'. When I met up with him for a pint in town that summer I quizzed him on the sudden change of heart and he said simply "The waiting is over, we have achieved freedom, so let us see if we can not fulfil our biological imperative like there is no tomorrow."

I stared at him and he said. "I just want to fuck."

I wondered then whether he had, by some quirk of fate, suddenly become the most normal male school leaver on the planet. What he said next knocked that theory to the ground.

It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining, the birds were singing, the girls were stripping and we were in a delightful beer garden, ivy climbing the wooden fence. I was just digging into a Cornish pasty and he had a burger rammed halfway into his mouth when he said, whilst eating. "You know I am absolutely certain now that my parents are phantoms of time."

Chapter 3
In Which Shit Gets Real

We had quite an interesting chat about the whole 'his parents being phantoms of time' thing. It was also then that I realized he had not been reading up on time travel for his own benefit, he seemed to understand that stuff as innately as I know how to navigate a street, instead he had spent 3 years researching time travel so that he might be sure I could get a thorough education on the subject if I so wished.

You might question why a man would devote 3 years of his life towards ensuring his mate had a similar level of knowledge on the subject of time travel, believe me I did. I have however in retrospect solved that particular conundrum. The Farsh-nuke was scared. He was changing, dying. He could feel his mind and body race on without him and even his parents were reminding him of his fear and disconnection with reality.

It was not that the Farsh-nuke was used to normality, he had always revelled in the unusual but now he was losing any connection with the world he grew up in. His parents were phantoms, somehow dependant on decisions made in his own future. His hormones were telling him to like girls and grow hair in unusual places. His friends were undergoing their own changes. The architecture of the walls themselves changed as school was left and he moved house. Some ancient intelligence was even stirring within

his own mind and I do believe that he could feel it, hear its night terrors. Suddenly planets, sciences and times opened up to him.

It must have terrified him, that he could wake up the next day and be subsumed into an entirely different personality. What must that be like? To wake up one day as a different person leading a different life? Not pleasant I would wager and certainly not when seen through the eyes of a hormonal abnormally intelligent geek.

I must have seemed like the only constant in his life, the one reassuring face of familiarity. I had had my whole hormonal 'rut everything that moves' stage done and dusted by year 11 so I was a reasonably static landmark on the plain of his existence. It also has to be said that at that time in that place I admired and even looked up to the Farsh-nuke.

Do not get me wrong, I still thought he was arrogant, strange and infuriating but I kind of let all that slide because the guy had not fallen to drink, drugs or sex, had got his work in early, set up a website, however unsuccessfully, and just generally tried damn hard to be the best. He was even scrum half in the quarter finals for sports day in our final year because he liked to push things.

He pushed it now, as I bit into my Cornish pasty. I gave him the look, one of many 'the look's. This one was an underused stabbing glare, it meant in no uncertain terms 'I think I believe you but I do not like the consequences and if you are joking I will be pissed enough to get up and leave.'

I was rather surprised when he understood and explained. His explanation was a bit long winded and referenced many shows I cannot be arsed to get the copyright clearance for so I will attempt to explain it instead. Imagine a cube being filmed with one of those onion skin echo effect filters, then imagine the echoes occur before the original movement. No, that does not work, bugger.

Instead imagine a cube linked by bungie cords to another cube on all vertices. Cube A bounces forward and Cube B is pulled along in its wake. That is in effect a neat visual for a temporal phantom only the cord is time and Cube B seems to be its own cube with its own agendas, until Cube A goes against such agendas and Cube B follows reluctantly. Ridiculous as that analogy may seem, I have just saved you watching 50 years of crap scifi to understand the same thing, be grateful.

Having explained just what temporal phantoms were, he then explained that he had been testing things for about a year after having gained enough evidence to warrant

such tests the previous two years. He admitted to my confidence that he had almost half as much faith in the idea as me and yet it seemed to hold water. I offered my part in the tests, saying that a rogue element, one not knotted to his timeline, might provide more interesting and distinctive results.

He cut off such idle observations, his eyes gleaming. “It is imperative that you do not get involved. Whatever madness I am wrapped up in, I do not want it to touch you. If you are witness to my parents’ temporal ties then they shall be fixed within time and not even I could disrupt their sure and certain courses.”

I thought back to his father’s familial behaviour in my presence and the way he did not seem to age, always 40 going on 50 and wondered if such advice had not already been countermanded by his own future. I wondered quietly of course, even if Farsh-nuke senior had contravened the rules of time, the Farsh-nuke himself had yet to know about it and I was not about to blow his cover.

I finished my Cornish pasty, now considerably colder and talk returned to TV and women. I was just weighing up whether Rose or Martha was the more tantalizing prospect and somehow managed to avoid the inherent leery misogyny involved in such an activity by turning it into something like top trumps. WWell Martha is a Doctor and she did save a tenth of the worlds population but Rose wiped out the Daleks and overturned the Autons.”

Abruptly the Farsh-nuke mused. “How do you think they do it?”

“Do what?” I said, still lost in my game of top trumps.

“How do humans see another human that is smart, witty, intelligent, sure-footed, then seduce them into becoming overwhelmed with passion and opening themselves up to be exploited?”

“Chat up lines, I suppose?” I might not have been from mars or another dimension but even I floundered at that question.

“What are chat up lines?”

“They, well, they sort of- Look how do you not know this?”

“I am a geek.”

“That is no excuse, I am a geek and I know what a chat up line is.”

“Ah but do you know how to reverse the polarity of a quantum collapse and align the logicity inhibitors of a galiant hovership to base 13?” To this day I do not know if he was bluffing.

“No, but I do know what a chat up line is because I have enough self confidence to think it is marginally more likely than time travel”

“Explain it then.”

‘Bugger’ I thought. I had intended to keep him talking long enough to think up a suitable answer but I had forgotten that talking with the Farsh-nuke requires 100% concentration if you want to avoid unsightly law suits for ABH.

“All right.” I grinned like a Cheshire cat. “A chat up line is what turns a thinking feeling fellow human being into a carefree sexual play mate.”

I was joking of course, using his question as the answer to the question but he rather seemed to take me at my word. A chat up line was just a tool for converting people into wilful sexual partners. This was, I feel, a huge mistake.

We left the pub soon after and parted company for what seemed like the final time.

“I shall miss you.” I said somewhat tearfully as we parted with a hug then a manly handshake.

“I doubt I will.” said the Farsh-nuke bluntly.

I strode home, quietly muttering about how I would kill the Farsh-nuke if I met him again.

The summer passed like all summers do, slowly with an almost tangible effort to drag the days past faster.

I entered Farnham College with the assuredness of a man whose successfully left his reputation and old life behind. I stepped through those double doors like Gene Hunt waltzing in on a hostage situation. I made to head up the steps and check out the library when someone bumped into me.

He spoke as if he was just finishing his sentence "-See what I mean?"

I did not look back. It was him, I could feel it in my bones, he was infuriatingly correct as ever. I strode onward like a drone, hand pulling me along hand rail, feet trudging up the steps, eyes fixed ahead. I turned and stepped up the library/reception floor. This was where I would sign on for two years of media studies. I should have joined the queue, I felt the urge like a billion Brits in a million tour centres, that inescapable hub of security, familiarity and veneer of productivity called like a siren.

I ignored the siren song and hurriedly hid behind a rack of shelves, picking up a Guardian and pretending to read it. I watched surreptitiously as he walked right up to me, turned and picked out a BBC Focus. He skimmed it, put it down, turned around and picked up an article of The New Scientist. He skimmed a few pages then mused "Interesting, it seems some scientists in America have managed to observe quantum reactions on a macroscopic scale."

He stowed the magazine and strode away. I took a sigh of relief then folded up the newspaper, the cover had something about a recession on it, and I stowed it. I strode up to reception, who pointed me toward the queue.

I did not notice him at first, I was adopting proper queueing procedure with little to no eye contact and all I saw was someone dressed in a black 3 piece suit with cheap slip on sneakers.

"Hi." I said out of courtesy and a nervous urge to get to know new people.

"About half past 5." He said.

"Pardon?"

"You are about to ask if I have the time."

I could recognise the mysterious intelligence act anywhere.

"For a quiet word?" I finished, body language exuding routine boredom, eyes burning into his soul, hopefully.

He smiled at me. "Notice anything different?"

"You do not smell like a waste disposal chute?"

“Nah.”

“You are into suits now?”

“No cigar.”

“What then?”

“I have no fear.”

“Oh well, of course I noticed that, it is the old sixth sense is it not?”

“Oh, of course, I forget. Anyway I have beaten my fear and I feel strong.”

He smiled round at the ladies in the queue.

I distanced myself from him like a bad plague.

We queued the rest of the way in silence and were soon/eventually finished with registration, had our photo taken and an ID card made up.

The day passed in a blur of form signing and nervous acquaintances, the Farsh-nuke had disappeared into the crowd but now his presence felt less like an omen and more like a lifeboat, a port I could call in at if the weather of the future did not turn out right.

My first nervous day of college passed like a misremembered dream. I left via the back entrance and fond it pissing down. The Farsh-nuke perched outside the door, leaning casually on his still furled umbrella, rain dripping off his trilby.

“Come!” He yelled above the thunder of rain.

I stepped outside, I expected him to unfurl the umbrella but instead he just strolled through the college sports field, sticking to the pavement and lead me outside to Alfred Road. He stopped, as if waiting for something, then pointed left so we hesitantly then quickly crossed the road before we reached the corner, where a traffic light system greeted us. We crossed in silence then strolled down the pavement. As we passed Sun&Moon he pointed to it with his umbrella. The rain was drenching my superdry coat and I looked at the Farsh-nuke’s umbrella like the starving would look at Greggs. We crossed a bridge then headed down a hill. We stopped at the bottom where there was

an alley turn off for the Maltings. We crossed and bypassed a bathroom showroom then walked down until we saw a park. We cross to enter it, stuck to the paving, crossed a river then came to a stop and stood in front of a war memorial.

We stood silently in the pouring rain looking at this monument for a while and I realised, he was doing this for me. I could tell by the slightly disgruntled look of impatience on his face that he was certainly not doing it for himself and that left me wondering why. Why would a man I had not seen since the dropping of a curve ball from hell walk me through the pouring rain to look at the monument?

I looked at the monument, I scanned through it name by name, then I saw it:

William Dickson Wright 1934-1942

“Shit.”

The Farsh-nuke looked at me and smiled. It is a smile I’ve only seen in fiction. The ‘Well Timmy, you have been a good boy so how about I explain this little mystery then eh, boy?’ smile. Pompous, benevolent, intelligent, patronising.

“My life unravels like a spool of paper.”

He bowed his head toward the ground. The smile gone.

“What of your parents?” I asked.

“I confronted them about it, told them my evidence, my theories. I found a letter the next morning saying that if I thought they were mere phantoms then surely life held no consequences.”

“It can not be easy to find out you do not really exist?”

“You are right, it is not. I have spent my whole life becoming someone and now I find that someone does not exist.”

“This could just be a coincidence though, surely?”

“Oh, I checked, seems someone brought the house back in the 1800’s and it has been kept in my family name ever since.”

“Well, that is proof then, surely?”

“The only problem is, I do not exist, not on any official records. I am a phantom as much as my parents. Everything I have is forged.”

“What about the Farsh-nuke then?” I countered. “You created it and you are known throughout the web?”

“I would hardly describe my poultry reputation in such a manner.”

“It does not matter. You did it, the Farsh-nuke! I am talking to you now and I stand as witness that William Dickson Wright, or whoever you really are, is also on record as being the Farsh-nuke. You exist.”

The Farsh-nuke was silent for a moment, then he looked at me and smiled.

“I have known you all my life and our every meeting seems predestined. I could feel the weight of this revelation as surely as I could feel the rain drops pummelling my trilby.”

“Is there anything else you could do?”

“Perhaps but I do not think you or I are ready for such feats yet.”

I laughed then I told him, told him what his father had once told me only with less of the ambiguity.

“You know what I think Farsh-nuke, I think aliens could be infiltrating this planet and not even realise it themselves. I think they could grow up human but with the wisdom of the ancients. I think - I think that if there is any truth to what is going on here then you are not going to find it in facts and figures but inside your own head and if you ever get confused about who you are then just remember you are the Farsh-nuke and you are my friend.”

He smiled warmly at that and doffed his wet hat.

“I shall remember those wise words until the day I die. That is a promise.”

I left him at the memorial, walked across the intersection and uphill until I reached the train station. From there I was able to retire from Farnham and phantoms, to the sound of Kasabian and the Arctic Monkeys. I got off the train at Woking and walked home but

this time there was no fear, no quaking in the bushes. I had seen my friend on the verge of unravelling, literally and figuratively. I felt unstoppable. My dreams however would cast a different light.

Pie and chips is something you only ever eat at home, specifically your mom's home. Only she will serve pie and chips because only she will have both in the cupboard at the end of the month and be all "There you go, love. Best finish them up." I had never really noticed pie and chips before, it was just one of those things, like getting rainbow drops and tic tacs on the way home from school. I noticed pie and chips now though because they told me what Descartes found through thinking and the Farsh-nuke lost by thinking. They told me I was real, I existed, my parents were not temporal phantoms and this reality was not a lie. That pie and chips was the best I have ever tasted because only it could cure existential doubt.

The next day I met Farsh-nuke at the station and he said nothing, merely offered me a smoke. I waved him away and he lit his own before he walked with me.

We did not actually say anything to each other as we schlepped to college because there were girls to check out, cigarettes to smoke and tarmac to wear away. We did talk though, we talked when he went his way in reception then somehow still ended up in my media lesson.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I hissed.

"I don't know."

"Oh, don't give me that shit. I thought you were doing politics and science?"

"So did I."

"Then what the fuck happened?"

"How the fuck should I know?"

I was suddenly aware that the room was very quiet and the eyes of the class were on me, gradually I leaned back. The Farsh-nuke was a little slow on the uptake.

"And now you are giving up like you are all superior, well let me tell you this, I am not fucking around here, I have no fucking idea why I am in this class."

“Neither do I.” said Mrs Hale.

The Farsh-nuke locked eyes with me for a moment and I understood that he knew the shit had hit the fan. He grimaced, scowled and turned around, standing up as he did so.

The Farsh-nuke looked Mrs Hale up and down, took an exaggerated sigh then looked Mrs Hale in the eyes while cocking his head. “Excuse me?”

“Just what do you think you are doing disrupting my class?”

“I am currently engaging in a conversation with my good friend here.” said the Farsh-nuke as I vanished into the paint work, quite unsuccessfully.

“Well if you would be so kind as to do it after class?”

“I would be so kind as to let you stop this conversation and get back to class.”

“Thank you”

Mrs Hale began addressing the class again.

The Farsh-nuke leaned over and began hissing urgently. “Every door I try, every route I try to take, leads me back here, I genuinely do not know what is going on.”

“Neither do I!” yelled Mrs Hale.

The Farsh-nuke stood and turned to her. “Really, Mrs Hale, that appears to be your catchphrase!”

He turned and knelt back down to talk to me hurriedly as he added “The paperwork has been changed. I am on this course and I can not change it. Something is stopping me.”

I was just looking at Mrs Hale, my eyes must have been wide with fear as he said. “Oh, you are not listening to me are you?”

“No.” said Mrs Hale. “But we are!”

He stood, turned and looked at her, just looked at her.

“Now that I have got your attention!” said Mrs Hale. “Would you be so kind as to leave

the room?"

He said quietly, almost muttering. "Would you be so kind as to be quiet?"

"What is that?"

"I said, would you be so kind as to politely shut the fuck up!?"

To say the class was stunned would be to say the pilot was shocked when his parachute did not open.

"I will report you to the head of year coordinator! All you have done is swear and shout, disrupting my class!"

The Farsh-nuke walked towards her. "Listen to me, Mrs Emilia Hale! There is nothing you could possibly do or say that would possibly make any difference! If you want to have any respectability left as a teacher I suggest you probe no further and let me continue talking to my friend here in peace!"

He was an inch from her face now. She had not even flinched. Those evening classes on how to avoid being intimidated by students must have done wonders.

"How dare you threaten me! I will have you suspended! Now get the hell out of my class room!" she barked.

He raised his head and started counting down, quietly at first then more loudly. Every teacher under the sun knows counting is a stress management technique and it is a sign that things are getting out of control. That being the case, Mrs Hale backed off a few paces.

"Listen to me, Mrs Hale." said the Farsh-nuke calmly but forcefully. "I do not want to be on this course, I want to be studying science and politics but I cannot and not because of some idiotic bureaucratic decisions but because it is physically impossible. If you try to get me suspended, court-martialled or hanged then you will fail because it is not possible."

"GO!!!"

The Farsh-nuke began walking slowly round her as he looked at her. "Try."

Mrs Hale lifted the handset of the phone, jabbing the buttons furiously.

“There is no answer is there?”

“Just wait!”

“You think time will solve the problem, that time will magically set things right?”

She hungs up the phone, ran towards him and began shoving him towards the door.

He made a show of effort to resist but that was all it was, a show. He though the phone not working was the confirmation of some theory.

“LEAVE!!!” Mrs Hale screamed as she shoved him towards the open door, which promptly shut. She yanked it furiously and was pulled comically into a stumble. This made her even more furious.

“Let me tell you something about time-” began the Farsh-nuke.

Mrs Hale hit him as she screamed. “Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!”

I stood. I stood for the Farsh-nuke and coughed politely.

Mrs Hale snarled towards me as she yelled. “WHAT!!!”

I sat back down, my work done.

The Farsh-nuke stopped slouching and loomed 4 inches taller than Mrs Hale. Now was his turn to boom. “I understand you are upset and outraged by the idea that your fellow human being might have an opinion different from your own but I will not tolerate violence within MY class!!!”

The room was silent and I called out. “Mrs, he is right, you do not know how yet but he is, so hear him out!”

My advice detonated the explosion waiting to happen.

“Your class! Your class! Just how is this your class! You come in here disrupting my students and threatening me! Why don’t you just fuck off!?”

“EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO KNOW!” cried the Farsh-nuke. He had her on the back foot now so he kept walking forward as he explained things. “I do not want to be here! I should not be here! I tried everything to avoid coming into this class! I tried to hang myself with a tie and it snapped. I ran in front of a speeding car and it stopped. I jumped off the top of the stairs and ended on the vending machine! Everywhere I went and everything I did led me back to here! Eventually I decided to go where I was intended and was just explaining to my good friend here why the fuck I apparently had to endure this horse shit lecture of yours when you so rudely interrupted both my conversation and your own fucking lesson!”

She was pressed against the back wall now and looked him over. “You are fucking deranged!”

“And you are messing with forces you do not understand!” Riposted the Farsh-nuke then he looked at the window and said. “But then again if I am just deranged you will not have to argue with me any longer!”

He strode to the door, tried it again then ran full pelt towards the window and jumped at the last second.

He fell awkwardly against the floor then dusted himself off, looked at the window and said “See?”

“What I see is an insane idiot!” said Mrs Hale.

The Farsh-nuke sighed, looked at me and said. “Honestly, some people...”

“I heard that!” cried Mrs Hale

“William Dickson Wright.” I said then I listed off the birth and death dates on the war memorial.

“What of him?” said Mrs Hale, glad of the distraction.

“I have known my good friend as William Dickson Wright for as long as I have lived but we did some digging and found out his birth certificates were forged. The only William Dickson Wright that ever existed is on that war memorial. My friend does not legally exist.”

“Explains a lot, does it not?” joked the Farsh-nuke. “I mean I am here and I went to

school and everything. I had a life but none of it officially happened to me. I am a ghost in the system, here but not here and time behaves rather strangely round me. It is like a sense. I can tell when doing or not doing something will create a paradox and paradoxes do not happen, time does not let them. I believe that is why I must stay in your lesson, because it will cause a paradox if I do not."

"You are insane!?" said Mrs Hale looking at us both. "You are both completely and utterly unreal."

"No." I said dryly. "He is."

"Yeah, I looked him up myself when I was checking out a theory you really would not understand." said the Farsh-nuke casually. "He definitely legally exists."

"That is a relief." I said.

"Who are you?" She said.

"Who am I?" said the Farsh-nuke. "I am the Farsh-nuke, I exist outside the law, I deal with phenomena that would question your faith in reality and I stand up to women who hit and shout and swear when reason could be a better guide. I came to college to learn, I intend to do that, even if I do Media Studies instead of politics and science. You just do not know when to let things slide."

"I have an idea." I said. "If this thing is tied to your timeline then maybe I can help you?"

He grinned like an imbecile. "Fantastic!"

I opened the door easily and held it open with my neck as the Farsh-nuke walked through then stepped through myself.

"Well, you are outside." I said pointedly.

"Thanks to your significance to me." he said. "I can only avoid media, if you avoid it with me"

"Oh, I did not think of that."

"Ah well, it is probably a good thing I am doing media, I have a feeling my life is gonna be filled with enough science as it is."

We made it to the library and I skipped the rest of the day. This temporal shit was getting serious.

The next day I turned up at media for the appointed time and was about to enter when a familiar voice declared. “It is cancelled”

I looked in disbelief at the Farsh-nuke.

“She committed suicide, was found flat as a pancake this morning.”

I was taken completely aback and suddenly wondering whether I should really have risked my neck yesterday.

The Farsh-nuke smiled what I would come to know as a cruel smile. “Only kidding! Dad had a word! Got the day off!”

“Your dad was able to defeat time itself!?”

The Farsh-nuke sucked his teeth. “It seems so”

“So what do we do? Why are we here? Why not just stay at home?”

The Farsh-nuke grinned. “You know those letters I have been writing to the PM?”

I tried to analyse the Farsh-nuke’s facial expressions but just got a smug knowing arrogance. I gritted my teeth.

“Yes?”

“He wrote back.”

I stared at him for a moment, shook my head and said. “Of course he wrote back, he would have to write back, why not write back to a 16 year old Doctor Who fan who does not officially exist?”

Annoyingly the Farsh-nuke’s grin just got wider.

“What did he say?” I asked after a pause long enough to realize he was waiting for me to ask that.

“The Prime Minister requested my urgent assistance on a difficult matter. I have got the details on my kindle, suffice to say we are going to London.”

“Which is 30 minutes in the opposite direction of Woking.” I muttered dryly.

“I know!” chirped the Farsh-nuke as he began pegging it down the stairs.

As we waited for the train I asked. “How are you paying for this?”

“Oh, do not worry, we are on expenses.” said the Farsh-nuke proudly.

“Hmm!” I said approvingly as we clambered into economy.

The train journey passed as all train journeys did in those days, with headphones in your ears as you gazed trance like through a window.

We arrived in Waterloo, passed the ticket barrier and took the usual dazed look around the vast place before shambling outside.

Then I saw a limo waiting with a man that held a printed sign that said. ‘Farsh-nuke’

I looked at my friend and found a million different contradictory questions bubbling to the surface of my mind, only one stuck out though. ‘What!?’

The driver greeted the Farsh-nuke with a handshake then we entered the limo and buckled up.

I was dumbstruck by events but the Farsh-nuke just leaned forward and grabbed a bottle from a cooler. “Ooh! Champagne!”

When the limo stopped we were dropped off in a grimy alley. The Farsh-nuke did not seem too surprised, muttering “Convenient” as we stepped from it.

The limo pulled away and we were left standing in an alley that as far as I was concerned may as well have been in a different county. The Farsh-nuke grabbed my hand and started pulling it as he strode off. I followed the not too subtle signal and we weaved our way through 5 or 6 blocks before we came to a drab grey building. He pushed open the door and I followed.

The reception was a drab counter with a lift and an air vent. I sighed when I saw the air vent because the improbable had just become highly predictable.

The receptionist spotted the Farsh-nuke and leaned over flirtatiously. “Farsh-nuke! You are back!”

He strode over and smiled politely at her.

“So tell me-” she said as though she was within his confidence. “What did you do with those naughty erosians?”

“I have not got a clue, love, my name is William Dickson Wright, though the real William Dickson Wright died in the war so I do not officially exist. I copyrighted the name Farsh-nuke and every reference to it on google works its way back to me. The PM sent me. It is my first time here.”

She seemed completely taken aback.

The Farsh-nuke just glared at her.

“William!” I said “Just why did you invite me?”

He answered without turning round. “You exist, you are not a temporal phantom or whatever the hell I am and I have a hunch you are going to be the barometer by which my life is measured by.”

“In that case, love, tell them we have just come from college and he no more knows his destiny than a tea leaf knows the history of the east India company.” I said.

She looked carefully at me for a moment then nodded. She picked up the phone and dialled. “Sir, it is the Farsh-nuke, he is here but he is not alone. No, it is not some girl, Sir, it is him. Yes, really him.”

She put down the phone, suddenly cold. She gestured to the lift, We entered and I casually remarked. “Well that was ominous”

“For you, ominous for you. They still expected me but were surprised to see you? I could find out you know, I could tell you your future, Would you like that?”

“No, I think that if the future is fixed then I would rather reach that moment with the

bliss of ignorance so I do not spend my life worrying about how it will end."

"And if it is not fixed? If a little knowledge can prevent that outcome?"

"Then the mighty Farsh-nuke has permission to save me." I sighed.

"I may have to hold you to that." said the Farsh-nuke quietly.

"I feared you might."

The lift door opened and a tall black man in a suit stood waiting for a lift. He greeted me like an old friend, shook my hand and smiled delightedly "Hey man, good to see you again. They said you were back, good to see you again."

"You too, man." I said, returning the greeting. "Give my love to those at home, eh?"

"Sure." He said as the lift closed on him.

The Farsh-nuke looked me over strangely then asked. "Who was that?"

"I have not got the slightest clue but we are striding among the ruins of our own futures, best to play along."

The Farsh-nuke shrugged then started down the corridor.

We came to a door marked 'Farsh-nuke' and my friend knocked.

I glared at him.

He shrugged. "I might be in."

I strode through the door and almost did a double take but composed myself before I announced. "The coast is clear!"

The Farsh-nuke entered and I fancied I could almost see brain dribbling out from his ears, so mind blown was he. He emitted a dull shriek almost involuntarily, like when we watched the Doctor Who Children In Need skit Time Crash together.

"Well, we know one thing." I said. "This is definitely your office."

There was an imperial dalek in the corner, a question mark handled umbrella hanging from its manipulator arm. Beside the door was a statue of Angel vamp getting staked by Buffy. A standee of Harry Potter was positioned behind the bin, a target drawn crudely on its forehead. A photo of Simon Cowell photoshopped to look like Hitler was attached to a punching bag that hung from the ceiling.

The Farsh-nuke wandered around the place in awe. “It is like they have looked inside my mind.”

Before we could dwell any deeper, the door opened and a young man with sticky up hair and a tweed suit welcomed the Farsh-nuke warmly. “So good to see you, Farsh-nuke, for what I gather is the first time ever?”

“Indeed.” said the Farsh-nuke. “I just thought the PM had got fed up of my haranguing him. Now it is vitally important that I am briefed totally.”

“Is your friend joining us?”

“Not for the briefing.”

“Very well. This way, Sir”

They left and I was alone in the Farsh-nuke’s office, or at least I thought so.

“It is you! Is it not!?” called a voice from somewhere behind me, I ignored it because I come from Woking and am thus made of hard stuff.

The voice kept calling. “The one who must not be named! The one that is named but must never be named!”

I looked at the dalek and wondered where I had seen that umbrella before.

“The Farsh-nuke has many names but no real name, he was never truly born and so never truly exists!”

I thought back to the Farsh-nuke’s dad and prayed he just liked to do a bit of cosplay.

“You exist! You were born but no one knows your name! You are known by association! No more no less!”

I found a peculiar admission slipping out. “I know my name.”

“Then why does no one else!?”

I stopped pretending to look at the Dalek and flat out answered. “They do. Everywhere I go. People recognise me and know my name.”

“They know you as your father’s son or the Farsh-nuke’s friend!”

“That is not true.”

“Then tell me!”

“No.”

“Why!?”

“Because I do not obey voices that call out from behind me.”

“Then find me!”

“Why?”

“Because you want to and you are more like the Farsh-nuke than you care to admit!”

I ran, ran towards the sound of the woman’s voice and navigated a maze of triffids, timelords and total perspective vortexes, searching for her voice. I found her in a cage, she was in something like a scaled up hamster cage and was, to my horrified amazement, completely naked.

“What happened? Who did this to you? Who could possibly do this to anyone?”

“I can tell you, but you must not interrupt until you have heard the entirety of my story?”

“Fair enough.”

“My name is Sarah Lockehart and I have a PHD in Quantum Physics. My life was, in short, bland. I grew up nerdy but I hid it well. I would parade up and down with the good looking girls and I could see my real kin, the geeks and dorks, hiding nervously in plain sight while showy sportsman pricks jeered and cheered for a glimpse at an ounce of

flesh. I would act the spoilt good looking brat for all it was worth in public then I would hurry home to get my forbidden fix of DC comics and, if I was lucky, Doctor Who. As a result of my double life I was more comfortable and able to better interact with the underclass, which made me popular with both parties but in such a way that they both felt a bit sorry for me instead of feeling jealous.

I acted like the popular girls until college, when I rough cut my own hair short, brought some clothes which had faded from fashion long ago and started to talk about geekery without feeling self conscious. Once I did these three things I dropped off the radar of most prick led Neanderthals and was thus free to pursue my favourite course of study without reproach.

After college I continued on pursuing my career with an almost single minded determination but now I had proven to myself that I was a geek at heart and smarter than most good looking women around my age I started to challenge that stereotype. Hanging around geeks had made me aware of their prejudices and crooked judgements so now I looked forward to the day when a speccy comic book fan would look at me with disdain as I passed, thinking me just another of the ignorant human cattle and I would politely remind him of a reference to some obscure event or character hidden within the egress of the series in the latest edition.

5 years after I got my degree I was in town to get the latest Call of Duty game when I heard a condescending voice call out. “I take it you are heading to Debenhams, I hear the new range is out!”

I knew two things from what he said. He did not know the slightest thing about fashion and he was a condescending possibly sexist/misogynistic prick. It is at this point here that if I had been online I would have not been in the position I am in now because online there is one rule that truly matters 'Do not feed the trolls.' and I would have strode right on without looking back. This was not online however and I still had a bit of a bug bear about people being prejudiced to the idea that a woman might go against the grain and do something different.

I turned to accost him, the words “Actually I was on my way to play some Call of Duty and that new range you are talking about is for dogs.” were already stacked up and leaving my mouth even as my mind was blown.

A long brown double breasted coat hung open on his wiry frame, he was tearing a tweed jacket, a question mark patterned waist coat, a light green collared shirt, a brown paisley tie tied in a Windsor knot. In his right hand he clutched a brown question mark

handled cane, in his left he clutched something like doggy treats.

He stood in front of a wooden shed that I had not noticed before, a half open door revealed a large bright, minimalist console room within, a room clearly 3 times as large as the shed itself. To his left and right stood two naked, impossibly good looking women with collars round their necks.

The man smiled. “As you will have noticed, I meant what I said about Debenhams.”

This is where I really should have run but I was a scientist, I was intrigued. I strode over to examine the woman on his right. I knelt down to meet her at eye level and said. “Hi.”

“Hi.” She said brightly and I dismissed the possibility from my mind that the women were primitives from some undiscovered tribe.

“Um, forgive me if I seem naive.” I said. “But why are you naked, on all fours and wearing a collar?”

“Oh, I am a pet.” She said casually. “I was a radio technician on Rigel VII when he got me.”

She looked up at the man then went to nuzzle up against his leg.

I stood looking at the man in something like disgust while he cheerfully stroked the woman's hair.

“I see you are confused.” He said, when he stopped stroking the woman. “Clearly this is something from beyond your scope of knowledge but don’t worry. I am not a slave trader and I look after them as best I can. They are my pets of their own free will.”

He looked down at the woman again and rubbed her behind the ear. “Are you not, snookums?”

As I looked at the man and the woman, cheerfully stroking and being stroked, it became hard to see how it was not consensual, even if I myself could not yet understand it. My attention turned to the shed and I strode through the door only to be confronted by the proof that the shed was indeed bigger on the inside.

I was just examining the console when he entered and said. “You know you are not really supposed to be in here, you could break something? Could end up vanishing off into

the cosmos with no idea of how to get back."

I smiled. "It is a TARDIS, is it not?"

His snarled angrily. "SEGHAT!!! SEptagonally systemic Green nothingness HAbitational Transcender"

"And the Green Nothingness?"

"Something that would take far too long to explain."

"I am not one of your Pedigree Princesses you know? I am a quantum physicist."

As soon as he heard the word 'quantum' his temper disappeared as swiftly as it had flared up.

"Really?" He said as though I had just told him the location of a gold mine. "Do you know I think we might be able to come to some little agreement?"

It did not take a quantum physicist to work out what part of that agreement might well involve so I swiftly interrupted. "But first Call of Duty and your dog collars?"

His gleeful grin swiftly vanished and he moved aside as he muttered. "Yes, go."

I left the shed, bade his pets good days then strode on towards an appointment with a game. The queue was 30 minutes long and when I got to the till I picked up the last copy. I headed home, bypassed the town centre and spent the next week glad I had already scheduled things so I would not have to leave my room. My encounter with that strange man prayed on my mind and I avoided the town centre for the rest of my life.

At least I did until my 60th birthday. Once I turned 60 I started to forget things, including that strange night. On the third of March I decided to walk the quick way home from the station and there he was, after all these years, not a day older, he had not even changed.

"Tell me -" I said curiously. " -is this how you get all your pets?"

"No." he said as he shook his head. "Normally I am not so kind"

"Then why me? Why did you let me leave all those years ago?"

“You said you were a quantum physicist.”

“And that was it?”

“That was it.” He said with a nod.

“Why?”

“All in good time my dear but first I must ask that you come inside.”

“Why?”

He sighed and clicked his fingers, his pets from that night ran out of the shed, stood on two legs and proceeded to carry me towards the shed. The man followed on behind.

I entered the shed and suddenly did not feel so old.

“All right!” I said irritably “Obviously this craft of yours contains some kind of stabilising atmosphere, we can talk, so how about some answers?”

“Very well.” he said genially. “When you said you were a quantum physicist, I realised you had information on a field vital to defeating a particularly difficult problem. I also had other less high minded reasons for wanting you around but when you reminded me about the dog collars I realised that it would be handy karma if you were allowed to live your life without my interruption and gain all the more experience to aid me.”

“Why now?”

“Because this is the night you die”

“I beg your pardon!?”

“Did you not wonder why we had not aged? We skipped forward until the last possible moment to intervene. Tonight you will have a heart attack and collapse, dying alone. You will be found the next day by a road sweeper.”

“You said your pets were such, voluntarily!?”

“And they are.”

“Yet you remove my choice? You force me to become your pet or I die!”

“That is not true!”

“Then prove it!”

He turned to the pet I recognised as having come from Rigel 7 “Have the clone brought out.”

The woman nodded then scurried off into the bowels of the ship.

“What are their names?” I asked, suddenly aware that for all I shouted about equality, I had so swiftly accepted their apparent natures.

“Sammy and Lucy.” he said “I would have told you earlier but I did not want to unnecessarily upset you. The longer you thought they were just pedigree princesses the more time I would have before you freaked out and realized the very real possibility that you yourself might become a pet.”

I laughed. “So you are going to make me become a pet?”

“No.” He said carefully. “I will not stop you from becoming one but the process will be entirely motivated by yourself.”

The woman from Rigel 7 returned with - Well, me. I was certain it was me. The woman looked exactly the same, only she was -

“Thirty years younger.” said the man then he whipped out something that looked like a cricket ball and hurled it over arm at my face. The ball connected and I blacked out then woke up looking at myself aged 60.

“I am sorry.” said the man. “No one should have to die but sometimes it can not be helped, good bye Sarah”

I watched myself turn and walk out the door then I strode up to the man and asked. “Who are you? Who are you that can switch minds between bodies and leave clones to die? Who are you that can travel in time and own women as pets?”

“I am the Farsh-nuke.” said the man .“And I come from outside the universe. It is my job to patrol the green nothingness and defeat those that would seek to destabilize it. If you

want to know what that is and if you want to help me then you can stay but you must not blame me for any changes you go through."

"All right." I said with a sigh. "I suppose you have just saved my life."

He smiled and rubbed his hands together.

I was granted a rather spacious room and although I could not take anything with me from home, what with everyone thinking me dead and all, the Farsh-nuke did manage to replicate suitable replacements and so it was that for the next three weeks I undertook a crash course in the nothingness, the history of the Farsh-nuke and how to fly and maintain a SEGHAT.

Then I started learning about the Logicios and came across the sylphs, their underclass. Sylphs were a sub-species created by subjects ingesting a special compound. Theories about the exact origins of the compound are many and varied but one thing is certain, when a human female is given the compound, the most marketable and popular sylph is created.

I studied the sylphs hard once I found out about them, certain as I was that it was this compound that was the secret behind the Farsh-nuke's pets. Once I had thoroughly researched the idea I came to him with the evidence and he laughed. He said he had made no attempt to hide it but that they had always become a pet voluntarily anyway. I was somewhat doubtful.

After I had come to the Farsh-nuke with the evidence he started treating me differently, I think in his mind, since I now knew about the dangers he could relax a little. We began to joke about how I might one day become a sylph and what it might be like. Soon we started almost flirting about the possibility whilst exploring alien planets and defeating various unusual alien enemies.

One day things got tough, we were split up and I was tortured. I managed to escape and make to the SEGHAT but I was shattered. I ran myself a bath and soaked for a while. The door burst open and I launched myself at the intruder only to find the Farsh-nuke, he had entered as he had only just defeated the evil monster of Zarg and wanted to be sure I was all right. I broke down in tears and the Farsh-nuke comforted me, telling me how he had defeated them and it was all gravy now. That is how it began.

I lasted another year of evil villains and threats to the universe before I began to get awfully tired of the whole endlessly putting your life in danger thing. By then the

scientific curiosity had pretty much worn off too. I considered asking him to take me home or drop me off on another planet or in another time but then he would take a trip to the Eye of Orion or somewhere and I would completely fall in love with the idea of staying.

6 months later I had determined why the Farsh-nuke's pets were happy to be pets, they got to go on the adventures if they wanted to but were equally able to just sit back and enjoy themselves. I told the Farsh-nuke this revelation and once more he laughed, pointing out that his passengers did not have to come adventuring with him. So I did not. I managed a year of life as a tourist on a nothingness cruise then I began to get bored, of both the on board entertainment and off world adventures. One game of pokemon was just the same as another mad plot to take over the nothingness.

At this point I considered leaving again but when life and death is not enough to keep you entertained, a job in an office and weekly binge drinks probably will not either. I decided at this point to treat myself as a scientific experiment, I would objectively try to become a pet. I would see if the Farsh-nuke's claims had the least bit of truth to them. I decided to keep a journal to record my findings and chronicled my life up until that point in detail.

Finally I started studying the Farsh-nuke. Getting to know him, building a profile of his life and activities and it was while I was doing this that I was seduced.

We were trapped in a university dormitory by this week's super villain and I was quietly watching the Farsh-nuke as he worked out how we might get out of there when he caught my eye and said. “Has anyone ever told you, you were beautiful?”

“Not lately.” I said dryly.

“Oh, shame!” He said as he edged closer to me.

“Oh, it’s okay.” I said breezily.

“No, it is an absolute crying shame. You are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.”

I thought of how many pets and women the Farsh-nuke had probably had and felt a shiver run down my spine.

“Rubbish!”

He kissed me, just a quick peck on the cheek but I melted.

“Really.” I said. “I am just a quantum physicist.”

He kissed me on the lips then pulled back and said. “Gotta love a quantum physicist.”

He kissed me and I kissed back. He tore at my clothes and I tore at his

You don’t need to know the details. he was a decent fuck but a bit anticlimactic.

As I lay in a post-coital haze he began putting his clothes on then when he was dressed he turned to me and stroked my face and said. “You have been observing me, watching me. You want to know who I am, well that is the best answer you are ever going get.”

He strode up to the door. it opened then he left me.

I did not bother moving, so chilled out was I that I dozed off and woke to find the Farsh-nuke looking down at me. “You missed me preventing the apocalypse.”

I smiled at his joke and he slid an arm under my back and knees then carried me back to my bed in the SEGHAT and left me there.

When I finally came round from my torpor I noted down the events, had a shower then studied myself in the mirror. I was brought crashing down to the reality that I was 35 or there abouts, time travel made keeping track of birthdays hard. I wondered how long I would get to be his pet before he rejected me for being mangy looking.

I entered the console room to see if there was a device to measure the biological age of a body when I saw that woman from Rigel 7 looking at something on the scanner. I walked up to her and she greeted me like a cat, weaving in and out of my legs. I asked her to stop then examined her collar, so this was Sammy.

“Sammy.” I asked. “What were you doing? I did not know you could operate the SEGHAT.”

She smiled “I said I was a radio operative on Rigel 7, not that I was a native. I was one of a seven man crew that crash landed on Rigel 7, when he turned up I had to go with him, the man is a legend where I come from and he is such a kind owner.”

I looked at her and sighed.

“Oh yes! I am sorry! You do not want to hear me gushing. Well, anyway, I was just looking up pictures of home, thought I might return soon.”

“Why?”

“Well he has got you, darling.”

A shiver ran down my spine

“Nah!”

“Anyway, I'll be going.”

Sammy was about to scurry off into the depths of the SEGHAT when she noticed me looking at her and added. “Unless that is there is anything else I can do?”

30 minutes later Sammy was curled up on my lap as I watched Withnail and I in my room and I asked her what it was like to be a pet.

A week passed and the Farsh-nuke dropped Sammy off with her own people.

As the sound of the SEGHAT's great engines roaring into life faded away I led the Farsh-nuke aside and started to make love to him on my bed but as we climaxed I screamed something every sane cell in my body was pleading against. I asked him to tame me.

After that moment I was property of the Farsh-nuke. He trained me using choco treats and I obeyed like the good little pet I was but still recorded events in my journal. The experiment may have been going well but it was still an experiment. Data had to be recorded.

A month passed and I got to know Lucy rather well then he produced a pill. It was the size and shape of a mint imperial.

“You know what this is?” He said.

I nodded. “I eat that pill and I cease to be human. I eat that pill and I am legally your property.”

He nodded and I practically bit his hand off trying to get at it. When I ate it I felt weird, I could feel some invisible force lift my independence and responsibility from me. I had

the same memories and felt the same things. I was the same person but suddenly my own life was incredibly insignificant. I looked at the Farsh-nuke and I could feel my psyche fixating on him, it was like I was a baby chick and I was imprinting on him.

“This is completely bizarre!” I screamed as my psyche warped around me.

The Farsh-nuke laughed

I blinked and shook my head, deciding something “I- I must go note down the effects in my journal! This may be the last time I get a chance to make such observations!”

I ran and heard the Farsh-nuke's laughter echoing behind me. Now the ground seemed to warp beneath my feet, the world before my eyes. I found it impossible to maintain my balance and coordination when running on two feet so gradually I started galloping instead. I entered my room on all fours, found my journal and tried to write but suddenly words were hard to write or even visualize. I concentrated everything on making vaguely literate notes on what had happened then I felt hands on my shoulders.

“Nice work.” said the Farsh-nuke. “Usually they cannot even think in words more than two syllables long, let alone write them. Now come on, we need to give you an upgrade!”

I looked at him in fear and hurriedly scrawled the word at the bottom. He picked me up and took me to a machine hidden within the bowls of the SEGHAT. It looked like a cyberman conversion chamber, which did not help my nerves. He entered a complex code then the machine opened and he strapped me down. I was too disorientated and scared from my recent species change to put up much of a fight. I screamed though. When the machine sealed around my face and the needles started injecting me I screamed until I passed out.

I vaguely remember the machine opened, the Farsh-nuke undid my straps then carried me, not back to my room but to the sylph room. He gave me my research journal and the book I'd been reading but other than that left no connection to my life as his companion. I looked in the mirror and I found I suddenly looked perfect, like life had been photoshopped.

There was a brief transition period. I would find myself heading to the library or the console room and suddenly realise that I could not do anything. I would often spend hours pawing at a bookshelf before the Farsh-nuke came along, picked me up and gave me the book. After I accepted my limitations however there was another part to the

transition period, namely that of me getting used to the idea that I belonged to somebody and all that that entails. I was in effect the Farsh-nuke's cat, an adorable kitten that he could not resist cuddling or playing with. In practise this meant that I got no sleep as he was forever picking me up, taking me places or setting me on obstacle courses.

After around 2 years I had accepted and adjusted to my position as a pet. I bounded into the Farsh-nuke's bedroom and leapt onto his bed, curling up on top of him and he carefully removed the bikini I had taken to wearing then secured a collar round my neck. I was surprisingly fine about this and 10 years later, when he was seducing another companion into pethood I felt cheered when he scooped me up off the floor and presented me to be tickled by his companion. She had nice soft hands."

I listened to Sarah's story with a reverential silence, refusing to pass judgement until I had heard everything.

"What happened then? When you became his pet?"

She grinned. "Now that you will have to find out for yourself"

The door opened and the Farsh-nuke entered. "Mate, we have got a job. It is big"

I turned and shoved him out the door, pulling it shut behind me. We entered the lift, got in the limo and arrived in a vast minimalist warehouse.

The Farsh-nuke had said nothing throughout the journey but now he strode forward to talk to a worried looking man in overalls. I ignored him, my mind poured over Sarah's tale and asked questions about my friend. I knew he was odd, I think I even sort of knew that he wasn't human but Sarah's tale and the evidence which backed up the most disconcerting parts of her story sent my mind into a spin I was struggling to escape from.

The Farsh-nuke suddenly grabbed my arm and started pulling me across the warehouse, he hissed into my ear as we walked. "What is up? You have been off with me ever since I left to get briefed."

"You left me in your room, in your office. Surely you must have known what I would find, or at least suspected?"

"I have not got the slightest fucking clue what you are going on about. Whatever else

you may think of me, I do not use my companions as pawns. I had no reason to deceive you."

"Oh really? I must say I would feel more convinced if I did not know who your favourite Doctor was."

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"More than you know, my friend. More than you know."

"All right, supposing I believe you? That I will at some point have a reason to mistreat my friend? I tell you I have not yet done it, you can not be angry at a man for what he has yet to do."

"So you have never looked oddly at a woman? Never found yourself browsing Petsathome to get something for a woman you are fond of?"

"Of course not, why on earth should I?"

"And the Green Nothingness means nothing to you? SEGHATs as well?"

The Farsh-nuke fell silent. I noticed we were approaching an improvised barricade, a fork lift had been used to pull various pallets across the floor and heavily armed soldiers were defending it.

"Let me guess." I said. "Base under siege with the enemy within?"

"Basically, yeah." said the Farsh-nuke.

"What are we looking at?"

"Something memory proof."

"I do beg your pardon?."

"It emits quantum scramblers which limit memory of the creature to RAM. Or at least that's what people have been able to work out. Apparently a policeman saw something and called for back up, he was found dead in this aisle. After a few more deaths, a tough policeman with army connections took a look and without looking away called for back up and had the barricade set up with the express orders that he was reminded about his

own orders and was not allowed to countermand them without supreme reason. He looked away and they heard his screams as he died."

"So not only is it memory proof but it can kill us as we look away? I mean what about when we blink?"

"Do not worry it isn't a Weeping Angel. Probably."

"What is the plan then? I mean considering we cannot remember the whatever it is, we are unlikely to remember killing it so do we just ask them to let us out in half an hour and send us home until there are more deaths?"

"Probably."

I frowned, I did not think the Farsh-nuke was likely to attempt something so supremely stupid unless he thought he was doing the right thing.

The Farsh-nuke spent 10 minutes convincing the soldiers to let us through, during the process of which, I was given a massive gun and swathed in ammo.

I waddled through the barrier, followed the Farsh-nuke and promptly dropped the majority of the ammo. I had received rifle training in the Scouts so the idea of shooting the memory proof creature was not that outlandish.

I looked to the Farsh-nuke and he had tossed the gun aside. He was looking to my right, down the aisle.

He was crying out. "Hello there! My name is the Farsh-nuke! I believe you might have heard of me!?"

I knew in that moment that for self preservation I would have to look at the creature so I told myself, if I seem to have blacked out then that is okay, it is just the memory proof creature, do not freak and try to look for it.

I turned my head and set my eyes on a huge black tentacled monstrosity that crawled along the walls.

I called out. "This thing can climb! Build the barricade higher!"

The Farsh-nuke was walking towards the creature now, apparently working off what I'd

told him.

“I came here in my SEGHAT through the Green Nothingness! I came for you! You are not where you are supposed to be!”

The memory proof creature sort of slobbered in reply.

I heard and was dimly aware of the barricade being raised. The aisle grew dark.

“William!” I called out urgently “You can not possibly hope to reason with it!?”

He half glanced at me growling. “Do not call me by that repugnant name, human!”

I sighed, sighted along my gun and started firing at the creature. The bullets pinged off it harmlessly.

I threw the gun aside and cried. “I am not a soldier, Farsh-nuke, but neither am I a fool! You have got something planned! Something you are not telling me!”

“Something you are not yet ready to understand!” came the riposte.

He ran at the creature and when he made contact they both disappeared. I felt like I must have forgotten something for a moment as there was no transition. One moment they met in battle, the next I was alone in a darkened aisle.

The Farsh-nuke appeared a moment later, he looked exhausted and I ran to catch him from hitting his head on the floor.

“Wh-where is the monster? There is supposed to be a monster but I see none.”

I laughed. “Do not play dumb, Farsh-nuke. Even if you cannot remember what just happened, you can work it out.”

He scowled then strode over to begin knocking at the barrier. I followed at a more leisurely pace and a passage was opened up before I caught up with him. We strode out and entered the limo before he admitted. “I was good, was I not?”

I smiled, that discussion could wait for another day. We got home without much incident and I buried myself into my coursework, desperate to regain the safe dullness that was the usual tone for my life.

Chapter 4
An Unhealthy Interest In Girls And Science

The next day there were thankfully no temporal shenanigans or memory proof monsters. We did have a new teacher though. A balding hippie with long hair.

It is no exaggeration to say that I and the Farsh-nuke spent the next 2 years chasing girls and winging our way through media assignments. I had a keen interest but got distracted by girls. The Farsh-nuke just literally had no choice. He would rush all his work a week after deadline and carefully coffee stain the lot before handing them in in the hope of getting kicked off the course but each time he got a reasonable grade. Time was evidently working overtime to make up for his mistakes. Do not ask how time can work overtime, not yet.

There would be a call to London once a month and there we would risk life and limb battling trolls, yetis and animated plastic. It was simple work with good pay and Christmas as always a joy. Invariably there would be some monster battle on Christmas day so we missed the main event but got invited to the Prime Minister's boxing day celebrations and would regale everyone with tales of the memory proof, bullet proof and time proof. Well I did, the Farsh-nuke preferred instead to talk political.

On New Years day 2010 at precisely 6 in the morning the Farsh-nuke rang me on my mobile.

"What!?"

"God, your breath is foul!"

"Pardon?"

"The phone can pick up the rogue neutrinos through sonar, I have got mine set to receive and decode that information. That is just appalling!"

"I believe you called me?"

"Oh yeah, have you watched the Christmas special?"

"Umm, part one is on my hard drive, why?"

“It is shit, do not watch it, worse than Love And Monsters, Fear Her and The Last Of The Timelords combined. Wilf knocked 4 times, 10 sacrificed his life for him.”

“Spoilers.” I rasped as I wondered why in the fuck this warranted calling me up.

“It is impossible to spoil the End Of Time.”

He hung up and I followed his advice, which is why I was a bit confused in June. Judging by the evidence of that first episode alone, the End Of Time had been pretty fantastic. The Farsh-nuke let me keep that illusion until November.

On November the twenty third 2010 we were walking to London when we both heard a certain wheezing groaning sound. We ran down Alfred Road to find it perched beside a house. I ran towards the blue box in joy and excitement, rationality for the moment forgotten.

My hand touched its surface and I suddenly felt very bitter as the hard oak panelling became something soft yet firm, like a sausage. I opened my eyes and saw that I had in my hand a bleeding man’s penis. I was horrified for a second then it turned into a katana and stabbed me in the chest.

I looked down at the hole in my chest and was completely surprised. Then I was not. Then the Farsh-nuke held my hand and another Farsh-nuke held my other hand, they held each other’s hands and one tried to break free of the other’s grip. The one who had his eyes closed was muttering something urgently. This I felt sure was the real Farsh-nuke then I felt nothing.

I do not mean it in purely an emotional sense either. I felt complete nothing and it was green, inexplicably green.

I watched the Farsh-nuke draw a seven sided shape in the sky with his finger then a seven sided metal monstrosity appeared to destroy the rapidly changing shape that was a polymorph.

“So this is the Green Nothingness?” I said. “That was a polymorph and you really do come from outside the universe?”

He nodded. “And that metal thing is a Septagonoid, a parasite of the Green nothingness, a machine powered by pure logic which believes quite rightly that the Green Nothingness and thus all universes and all life is an accident. That’s where the

reason ends however and now it believes everything that does or doesn't exist should die."

"Farsh-nuke, if you come from outside the universe then why do you go to college?"

"Because my timeline has wrapped around itself, giving me the knowledge to avoid bad decisions but an inability to actually avoid them. My guess is that in the original timeline I grew up alone, under an assumed name given to me by my executors. I lived a hard life and I followed you through life as my only role model."

"Guess I did a bad job then?"

"Why?"

"You will find out, one day."

He laughed then said. "You know the whole bit about the raggedy Doctor in the Eleventh Hour? It happened in the last twenty seconds of the End Of Time."

"Oh."

He grabbed my hand and we were back in Alfred Road.

We finished college without much hassle, even the Christmas special had him happy which was a relief, although he would not stop talking about flying sharks for the rest of the year.

University was upon us in 2011 and there the Farsh-nuke started exploiting his past self's honest devotion to the craft by ignoring it completely. Instead he would flirt with girls near constantly. Three weeks in he ran into my bedroom (he had had a key cut) and announced that he had found a system to bed women. I implored him to teach me and by Christmas I had just gotten the hang of it when he dropped the S-word.

"I have just remembered something." He said excitedly. "Sylphs!"

The word chilled me to the bone and I faked drunken agreement of the idea then proceeded to warn all my female friends and most of my ex-lovers off him.

It took him a year to perfect the drug and taming technique. I tried to ignore most of it but then I- I buckled. There was a girl I liked, she was sweet, intelligent and had a body I

wanted to get close to but she was alas a lesbian and the Farsh-nuke's system had limits so I asked him over the course of a week, whether he would give her to me. Or rather I subtly convinced him to ask me. I then convinced him that I wanted to but could never find the courage to actually say so but that I would gladly receive her into my care.

I watched it happen, I made it happen. He approached her after lesson one day and gave her complements and heavy petting then some gum. The next day he turned up at her house and started wooing her as per his system but started laying it on thick about how he wanted her to become a pet, how he would treat her kind and what she could expect. Then he seduced her, brought her close to release and dosed her. I can only go by what Sarah told me as to what becoming a pet was actually like.

He gave her to me and I enjoyed her company for about a week before I found the whole thing too sickeningly misogynistic and exploitative to endure. I gave her back to the Farsh-nuke, who looked after her reasonably well considering there was no infrastructure for keeping people as pets.

At 13 minutes past the thirteenth hour on the thirteenth day on January 2013 I got a call on my mobile from the Farsh-nuke. He was sobbing. "I- I- I am so sorry, so terribly sorry, terribly terribly sorry!"

"What has happened, Farsh-nuke?"

"I- The system! The system! The god damn system! There was an accident! Dear god, what have I done!?"

I abandoned any attempt at keeping to my schedule and started walking towards town. "Where are you, Farsh-nuke!?"

"The subway"

I ran.

I found him in the dark of the subway sitting on his blazer, being straddled by the corpse of a girl who I thankfully realized I didn't recognize.

The Farsh-nuke looked up at me, blood round his mouth, snot streaming as he cried. "I am so sorry! I am so sorry!"

"Shut up!" I said. "Shut up!"

I pushed my hands through my hair and pulled, to check I was awake.

“Oh god! Oh god! Oh fucking god!”

I forced myself to look at the girl. She had a collar around what was left of her neck. Her heart, lungs and other internal organs still seemed to be within the ribcage or resting on what was left of the torso but the flesh and muscle was missing. I saw from the teeth marks on the ribcage that it had been eaten. I looked at her arms and saw that they too had been picked clean. The hands were left though.

It did not take a genius to work out what happened but there was proof it would not take forensics to confirm.

“You lost your filling.” I said dryly before I turned around to puke.

The Farsh-nuke called out to me, pleading sorrowfully. “Help me!”

I turned round and spat. “Finish her! Finish the job! Finish what you started!”

He looked uncomprehendingly at me and I growled. “Human life is sacred, Farsh-nuke. If you are going to take one then you damn sure better not waste it.”

I walked away and called the police.

They arrived and caught him in the act of eating. I stood witness for prosecution. I also however stood for his defence when the woman’s family requested that he be extradited to stand trial in their country because in their country the death penalty was still legal.

I saw the Farsh-nuke one last time before he was sent away for his crimes.

“You set me up.” He said.

“You ate one of my own.” I said.

“I have saved so many more of your people. I paid for her sacrifice a thousand times over and she was a sylph, not really human.”

“Tell me where it ends, Farsh-nuke? When do you stop? With one? Two? Or three? Maybe a hundred? Maybe a thousand? What if it does not stop? What if you instead

become a pirate of the nothingness, raping, owning and dating women until someone shoots you dead?"

"Not a bad life."

I stared at him for a long moment then said contemptuously. "Remember, Farsh-nuke, somewhere out there is the real Doctor and sooner or later you are going to run into him, probably try to take off with one of his companions and he will spare you no mercy."

"He did once."

"No second chances, that is what kind of man he is."

The Farsh-nuke snorted with laughter then said. "I could leave here any time I like"

"Oh I have no doubt of that but we have got your parents. You are not getting out for a long time. Goodbye, Farsh-nuke."

I left him to it and never looked back until 10 years later when he was released along with half the world's prisoners who had all suddenly been let off for good behaviour. Next election had half the world voting him and his friends into power. The Farsh-nuke soon let fly a load of policies intent on making sylphs a legal reality. Naturally they did not take effect just yet but they did pave the way for necessary supportive companies, organisations and trades to come into being. At the same time as his sylph agenda was being worked, the Farsh-nuke pushed for the country and planet to begin colonizing other worlds.

As soon as the Sylph legislation became public I decided it was time to have a chat with my former friend. I turned up at his house and found it was under armed guard. I knocked a guard out without the other's noticing, or at least not until I had a loaded gun in my hand. I killed without mercy as I had gunned down beast after beast while working with the Farsh-nuke.

I entered the house and found his mother alone. She seemed almost immensely pleased to see me.

"It is you! Oh, I knew you would come, my knight in shining armour!"

"I need a chat with your son." I said as I tilted the gun barrel sideways. "Sorry."

“Oh.” She said. “I always knew this day would come.”

I escorted her out of the house with my gun and caught a train to London. There we approached Parliament and I barked. “Farsh-nuke! I have your mother! Call off the goons!”

He welcomed me into his living room with open arms and said. “My dear boy, if you ever need a chat, you need but to ask. Surely you do not think me so corrupt that you have to kidnap my own mother for me to be prepared to listen to you?”

I was mollified somewhat. “Well I suppose not-”

I was interrupted when he pulled a pistol from his pocket and shot his own mother in the head.

“Still, best make sure it can’t happen again.” He said casually.

A load of armed guards ran into the room and with a wave of his hand the Farsh-nuke said. “Clean up this mess!”

As he wiped his hands clean of GSR, he asked casually. “So what did you want to talk about?”

“Sylphs.” I said. “You are creating a global conspiracy to allow my people to be brought and sold as cattle.”

“And your people are women are they? I mean I knew you were a cunt but I did not realise you actually had one?” The remark was clearly said out of spite. An unfeeling offensive verbal parry.

“My people are the human, the oppressed and the mistreated. You are against everything I stand for and I know you, Farsh-nuke, I can hurt you!”

“Then try? You are human, you will not topple the great Farsh-nuke!”

“Oh, is that what you are calling yourself!? Well I have got an alternative! The Great White Farsh-nuke! You are just a shark that has been circling this planet and now you are going in for the kill, you are not going to like the taste. War, conspiracy, oppression and rebellion is what we do best, so enjoy your reign.”

“And enjoy your stay in prison.”

“Pardon?”

“You committed treason, you murdered my mother in cold blood before my very eyes.”

“Bullshit!”

“Who are they going to believe? Her son, the Prime Minister, or the man who threatened to kill her?

That was the last I saw of the Farsh-nuke until a month later when a shed appeared in my room with a stammering ‘Sh!’ and a staggeringly beautiful woman stepped out. “I know, I’m a stereotype.”

I looked past her to the room beyond and she shut the shed door then said. “I know this is going to be hard for you to understand, it is hard for me to understand but I need you to listen.”

I sat down on my concrete bed and the woman sat beside me, she was wearing a black suit two sizes two big for her. She behaved strangely, as if her own body was a novelty.

She looked at me and said. “You are my oldest friend and I need you to understand that I forgive you for your actions. The Logicios got to me and they decided that I needed to be punished but they needed me to have an appropriate punishment so they decided to turn me into the perfect sylph archetype, after they had killed me first. They sculpted my new form into a paragon of female desire, even sculpted my personality and mind but left enough of the could have been me to make the punishment hurt. They can not however interfere directly with history so they need you to deliver me to myself. I am to be his new plaything for as long as he reins.”

“Which is?”

“Ten years.”

“In other words, until I next make it out.”

“Yeah, sorry.”

“So what do we do?”

“There is a gun than can teach you how to fly the SEGHAT. I will resist being tamed until we have landed somewhere future me can best make use of it. After that I think a night on the town is in order.”

“Sounds good”.

She clicked her fingers and I strode into the SEGHAT, not entirely surprised to see that it was bigger on the inside.

“How does it work?” I asked.

She pointed to the gun.

“If this is a trick-?” I said.

For a moment the woman almost smiled. “If this were a trick then I have gone to an awful lot of effort to avoid simply blowing your head off.”

I shuddered as I remembered the Farsh-nuke shot his mother. Then I picked up the gun, put it to my head and pulled the trigger.

It is amazing how tediously dull a SEGHAT is when you use a memory gun, it is suddenly very old hat.

I looked down at the controls and set about piloting the ship, she protested a little, I think because she knew what flight this was.

The ship shook and shuddered, I looked to my companion and she was leaning sullenly against the wall, wearing a strange suit emblazoned with skull and crossbones. I heard the guttural roar of the ships engines die away as we landed and opened the doors. We swept out and my companion turned to kiss the door as she pulled it tight and locked it. She muttered. “I will see you later, old girl.”

The Farsh-nuke’s dad strode up to us, speechless, took the key then entered the ship. The sight itself was so bizarre that I did not register until after the ship had left that he was wearing a cream suit with a bamboo cane handled umbrella. Neither of us said anything for a while.

We had landed in Waterloo Station, I headed to KFC, the drain in the kitchen sink that is London's largest station, attracting the poor, the reprobates, washed up and dried up. I enjoyed a boneless banquet and she brought a bucket, we ate in silence for a while, overtaken by the primitive desire to cram as much food as possible into our gobs.

As I took my second gulp of diet coke I asked. "So what should I call you?"

She almost laughed. "Lunch? Pet? Good Girl? I do not deserve a name, I do not want a name, I do not even really have a name. I am just someone who did a bad thing and is being punished."

I tore into a chicken fillet. "Everyone deserves a name, even the Devil gets to have a moniker and what about Hitler, Stalin or Pol Potts?"

She picked the flesh from a chicken bone. "Look around yourself, notice anything? We are in a KFC in the busiest train station of the largest city in England, a place connecting us to such esteemed places as Woking, Guildford and Aldershot so why is every woman a supermodel?"

I took a sip of my drink. "You are exaggerating, there are plenty of ugly people."

"Plenty of ugly men sure but what about women?"

I took a look and it did seem as though she was right when I really looked but then I spotted someone, a girl two rows down on the right.

"There!" I said a bit too loudly while I pointed. "There is a fatty!"

I saw the woman's face explode in horror as she hurriedly put down the legs she was eating and started to run out of the KFC. I looked down at my companion and saw that she had her hands before her eyes. I looked back up and saw a man from the till run to catch up with her. He soon slapped his arm around her neck, like an old friend and proceeded to drag her backwards into the staff only section. I caught a glimpse of her face as she was dragged into the parlour, her eyes were filled with hatred and fear as the man held a knife to her neck.

I stared helplessly after her.

My companion explained. "Every woman that is fat, ugly, disabled, injured or opposed to the new regime dies. Their bodies and possessions become property of the government,

of William Dickson Wright, the Great Farsh-nuke. The possessions are sold, their bodies sold on the black market for food and replacement organs for the rich. William Dickson Wright is using the opening gambit of a conspiracy to fund global technological advancements. It is sick, it is disgusting and it is why I do not deserve a name but do deserve to become his pet."

I finished my boneless banquet in silence then picked up one of her chicken legs and casually started eating it. "If William is so evil then why are you not stopping him?"

"Because the past can be changed but not history."

"What is the difference?"

"You know what the difference is, the past is personal, history is plural. Like a bag of rice, the past applies to the grain, history applies to the bag. No one notices if one grain is substituted for another but if the bag disappears then suddenly all those grains are not where they are supposed to be."

"You are explaining the web of time with rice?"

My companion stuck her tongue out at me then said. "I am a pet, I am allowed to be dippy."

I finished the chicken bone, discarded it with a sigh then said. "If the bag is so important then it must be in part beneficial in some way. I mean there is a reason we still remember Hitler."

My companion looked at me then frowned. "All right, you do not need to quote Timewyrm Exodus at me. In five years women will make up 70% of the population of the world, many will be farmed or kept as pets, most of those will not make it beyond thirty. Those who live freely will start wondering what is so great about human flesh and William will find his hand forced. The same process will be applied to men and by the end of his regime men will be outnumbered nine to one."

"Not seeing how this is beneficial."

"The tables will be turned and man will be a second class citizen, fighting for the vote. When William's empire falls, the human race will have its best chance at peace."

"Ten years of conspiracy and cannibalism then suddenly everything is just peachy?

Forgive me if I am a just the tiniest bit doubtful."

"It is not just that, for ten years the human race will have had an unpaid work force, more money than ever before and a ruthless leader. Global warming will cease to be a problem, electric cars will be the norm and mars will be successfully colonised, not to mention a billion other tiny advancements. Do you think the new world order is just going to forget about all that and pick up where they left off? Of course not, they are going to have the finest geniuses working together for a brighter tomorrow."

"Picking up where the Nazis left off, how quaint."

"Except that in this case everyone is a Nazi, there are no Jews left and there is no western resistance. Anyone who was not a Nazi was dead before anyone realized Nazis were a bad thing. There is no war and nobody dies. It is a revolution of the mind, not an uprising."

"That is like saying that once the daleks have wiped out all alien life they will take up poetry."

"You are talking to your friend, a former cannibalistic global dictator, who has been transmogrified into a female humanoid pet, the perfect present for her own past self who is currently in power and you are doubting humanity's capacity for change?"

"Yes." I said glibly. "But what I really want to know is what I should call you, I mean I can not call you the Farsh-nuke, can I?"

"Actually a category 3 plastification offence, impersonating the Farsh-nuke."

"Shit."

"Yeah."

"What on earth is plastification?"

"Genetically engineered bacteria are injected into a subject and the bacteria eat the cells, excreting plastic duplicates. Subjects can feel themselves eaten away at the cellular level. It can take days for them to die."

I fell silent and stared at my companion. "I think you should be called the Unleasher."

“Why?”

“Because that is who you are now. Where once you leashed, you now unleash.”

“All right, I’m the Unleasher.”

She stood up and left, I followed her and we strode from the station into the night.

I was a bit miffed at her suddenly striding off. “Excuse me! What are you doing? Where are you going?”

“My entire life you have defined me. As kids I was your friend, in college you called me the Farsh-nuke, towards the end you were the guardian of my future, you knew what I would become, how far I would fall. Now I am changing history, photoshopping myself into my own past and I really really do not know what is going to happen.”

“Well I gave you your definition, the Unleasher, what is wrong with that?”

She stopped walking and turned, gesticulating wildly. “What do you see, friend!? What do you see when you look at me!?”

“I see a beautiful woman in a lot of distress.”

“I see a virus, a parasite, a great terror born on the waves of the nothingness! I see a sad prick led little boy who became a mass murdering conspiracy founding cannibalistic dictator! I see a pathetic excuse for a toy sylph raging against the dying of the light! I see hatred, rage, hunger and lust!”

She turned round and walked away in disgust.

“I see, my friend.”

She stopped at my words but did not turn around.

I caught up with her and she said. “I want to do you proud, old friend. I want to live up to that title, I really do but this body was born in chains. I have to be a pet.”

I found myself wrapping a protective arm around her shoulder and squeezed. “You will be the best but it does not have to stop you being the Unleasher and even if it does I will not be disappointed. I do not care who you are, so long as you do not eat my

brethren."

She looked at me and smiled. "That is it, that is the motto I can live my life by."

She turned to address the skies. "Did you hear that, Kneale! I am the Unleasher and come what may I shall free my brethren! I am the archetype! The measurement by which all sylphs shall be measured against!"

"Who the fuck is Neil?"

"An old friend, now let us go find a club, you are going to need an awful lot of alcohol."

I shrugged and we strode to Soho, I had never been before but she seemed quite au fait with it. She brought two pints of Vodka and Monsters.

"A pint of vodka and monster?" I said. "Is that even possible?"

"It is when you have one of these." she said as she held up a blank piece of card.

"That is not-?"

"Yep."

"Slightly psychic paper?"

"Christ, no! It actually forces your mind to fill the card with something you would expect to see. I show it to the bar maid and she apparently sees an undercover goon who knows something that could get her killed. I show it to you and you see a blank piece of card, the typical psychic paper."

I sipped my drink and felt a blast of alcohol numb my brain while various stimulants flooded my system to keep me standing. "So what is it really then? Some kind of circuit board?"

She sipped hers and nodded. "You could say that but it's an organic board. There is actually a thin wedge of pure nothingness here and the surrounding logic lattice tries to prevent you seeing it. A logic sensitive like me can see through the logic lattice and affect its 'programming' a little so that if someone expects a fraudulent ID, I can make the logic lattice represent an authentic one. Relatively simple stuff really."

I looked at her, realized I understood what she was saying and downed half the pint in one go, reasoning that I was still too sober.

The Unleasher looked alarmed. “What are you doing?”

I gulped down a third of what was left. “Getting drunk.”

“You want to waste your last night of freedom pissed out of your head?”

“You said I would need it.”

“I assumed you might retain some common sense and not chug it all away.”

I finished my drink, looked at the Unleasher and asked. “This regeneration, did it change everything?”

“Why?”

“I am going away for ten years, a man has needs.”

“I did not get such needs taken into account when it was my turn.”

“You ate a woman, I was framed.”

“It might be awkward, I used to be a man.”

“I used to be a child.”

“We are friends, we do not want to risk ruining that.”

“Bit late seeing as how we have put each other in prison.”

“I am an alien.”

“And a very hot one at that.”

“You did actually kill some guards in cold blood, you deserve to be punished.”

“Then punish me?” I asked with a smirk as I studied her.

The Unleasher looked at me and I could feel her eyes mentally undressing me then she finished her drink and called. “12 pints pints of Vodka and Monster, if you please!”

I smiled. “Six pints at lunch time, forever the geek, ey?”

Her face screwed up into a frown. “Why is it lunch time?”

“Well, it is the last supper.”

She stared blankly back at me then her eyes noticeably dropped and a thin smile spread on her face. There was a clatter of glasses as 12 pints were placed on the table beside us.

“Yes.” She said at last. “I think it is.”

I think at that moment a grin sprang up on my face but I grabbed for a pint and swiftly chugged it back.

“I say-” said the Unleasher coyly. “I think you have spilt some, let me clean it up.”

She removed a hanky from her trouser pocket and started to wipe away at my chest and neck. I slammed the glass down with a belch and she began to wipe away at my face. At some point the hanky disappeared and her hands were round my neck but I was slightly less than sober so did not really notice.

I heard her whisper in my ear. “You are only in love with the Unleasher, understand? The Farsh-nuke does not do men.”

I nodded and she started to kiss me. Dimly, it occurred to me that she might have been won over by the force of my words and was taking pity but Unleasher or not she was still the Farsh-nuke and thus very good at convincing you that it was you who was seducing her and wanted her.

I will not reveal much about that night except to say that my last supper was strangely and delightfully minty.

I woke up the next day to find myself in a bed in a bedroom that I do not recall ever having seen before. The Unleasher was lying beside, with an arm draped around my torso, just as naked. Our clothes spread around the place.

“What on Earth!?”

The Unleasher yawned. “I flashed the card and he let us have the room for the night.”

“Who did?”

“Him!” She said as she rolled over to indicate the naked man that lay next to her.

“Shit.”

I got up and started getting dressed, the Unleasher just started rummaging through her clothes. When I was dressed I turned to her and she held out a collar, length of Ribbon, a really long multicoloured scarf and two pill bottles.

“It is time.” She said.

“Time for what?” I asked.

“Time for me to give up free will, independence and human rights.”

I sat down beside her and held her hands then recited. “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

The Unleasher snorted. “He does not exist.”

“Neither does that card.”

“You do not seriously believe in that bullshit?”

“The things I have seen, the things we have done, I would not be surprised. So lord if thou art in heaven, protect my friend and defend her from herself. Though I may deliver her into evil I do so on the condition that she be kept safe.”

The Unleasher looked at me for a moment then muttered “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”

I was astonished. “Did you just pray to God?”

The Unleasher shrugged. “You define me and if you think praying to some fictional being will help me then I believe you.”

“You are just saying that because you want to protect me aren’t you?”

She looked away. “Anyway the red pills will complete the job, turn me into a pet. The green pills will cure me. You must only cure me when you are released. If you cure me too much then the woman I am now will crumble away, replaced by the could have been me. Once I am a pet, I need you to wrap me up in the ribbon. then give me to myself.”

“And the scarf?”

“Like all of my belongings, it belongs to you.”

“Oh!”

“Now, if you would do the honours?”

I picked up the collar and was amazed to find it had the Unleasher’s name on it. I secured it round the Unleasher’s neck and my confusion must have been evident as she answered. “I am inserting myself into my own past, when you gave me my name I responded by that name and introduced myself as it, at the same time in my own past I had to replace the Unleasher’s collar at some point and so made up a suitable replacement, when I was overthrown and executed. I pocketed the Unleasher’s collar and it was still on my person when I became the Unleasher.”

“So it is not an ontological paradox then?”

“Only barely, now come on, dose me up.”

I removed a pill from the red bottle and handed it to the Unleasher. “I shall miss you”

“Likewise.”

She swallowed the pill then grimaced. “It is flooding through my brain, shutting down whole warehouses of information. Oh god I can not pilot the whatevery doodah now! Oh no! It is flooding through my personality, warping key facets of my- Ponies are cool! Stroking is nice!”

She looked up a me, doe eyed. “I can feel it. Everything I am. Everything I was. It is giving it to you, my lonely angel. You will protect me and care for me, won’t you?”

I said nothing, she looked at her own hands. “Life is meaningless, I am meaningless, just a toy, a trinket.”

She screamed, it was a horrific shriek of despair, rage and terror. I sat beside and hugged her. “Unleasher? Unleasher, are you all right? Unleasher, answer me!”

She giggled. “You give nice hugs.”

I held her and sat there crying from a moment.

The man had woken up and was looking anxiously in my direction. “Is everything all right?”

“It will be.” I said. “Just give us some privacy, please?”

He left with some clothes and I did as my friend instructed. I wrapping her up in a bow then I searched among her suit and found an infinite bag. - It is a construct of logic, a pocket of space-time exists within the interior that can be infinitely bigger than the outside. - I packed her clothes and mine within the infinite bag then nicked some from the guy’s house and put them in there too. Finally I placed the Unleasher within the bag too, along with the scarf and pills, then I stored the bag under my tongue and ran out of the house in a pair of undies and a shirt.

I used the nothingness card to procure a suit and a hair cut and made my way to number 10. Security looked tight so I strode up to the first guard I saw and handed myself in.

“Why should you wish to hand yourself in?” He asked.

“Because I want to speak to the Farsh-nuke and I am an old friend.”

He removed his gun from his belt and levelled it at me, I gave him a kick to the nuts as I smacked the gun from his hand. When he recovered I had his own gun levelled at him.

“Want to rethink your decision?” I asked.

Funny how cooperative a guard can be with a gun to their head, well not funny exactly,

more tragic. Either way I was led into the sitting room of number 10 and gave the guard his gun back. He levelled it at me and I sighed. He squeezed the trigger twelve times before I put him out of his misery. “Stop playing silly buggers, Sergeant. I am an old hand at this.”

He finally checked the gun cartridge, saw that it was empty and stared daggers at me.

“On your way, Sergeant”

He turned and left as I turned to see the Farsh-nuke decanting some port.

“What is it this time? These intrusions are getting awfully tiresome.”

“You are getting noticed, Farsh-nuke, ships are monitoring your activities even as we speak. They are not just monitoring you any more either. They freed me to deliver you unto yourself.”

At this point I tugged the infinite bag from under my tongue then blew through it while the entrance was pointing outside of my mouth. A metre of lining was pulled out as the Unleasher, wrapped in the ribbon, shot out, followed by the long scarf. The logic within the bag swiftly pulled the lining back within the interior and I stowed the infinite bag back under my tongue.

The Unleasher looked up at the Farsh-nuke and giggled. “Hello, me!”

“What is this?” asked the Farsh-nuke.

“This is the Unleasher.” I said. “And she is you and yours. You become your own pet, enjoy!”

The Farsh-nuke looked at me coldly. “This is my mother!”

“That is you!”

“My mother is me?”

“Do not pretend you have not always known as much.”

“I- I killed myself?”

“The great Farsh-nuke! He killed his mother! He owned his mother! He is his mother!”

“I’m not the Farsh-nuke, I made that up, I am really William Dickson Wright.”

“So is she!”

“But-! But-! But-!”

“10 years, Farsh-nuke! You’ve got 10 years then you become your own pet! After that, well you murder yourself in cold blood!”

“Why are you shouting!? Stop shouting!”

“I am shouting so any listeners have a clearer picture of just how fucked up their great Dictator is!”

He looked down at his future self then turned to me. “What would you do?”

“Sorry?”

“If someone came up to you and said you could do anything to them, it did not have to be legal, they did not even have to be alive by the end of it? What would you do? What if they said they were you? Would you take that chance?”

“Not if they were also my mother.”

“Seriously though, what would you do?”

“They want you to be punished, Farsh-nuke, and they want you to punish yourself, that being the case I would say Carpe diem.”

“Live for the day so my punishment might be greater in the future?”

“You are going to turn every member of the human race into a cannibal so Carpe bloody diem! Do not ask me to save you from yourself!”

“You know you can be rather cold sometimes?”

I laughed. “Hurry up and have me transferred back to my cell, I would rather talk to the mould in the crap bucket then spend another moment in your self pitying company.”

He ordered the guards to take me away and before I left I stared at him “Goodbye Farsh-nuke! It has not been pleasant!” I spat on the floor and returned to my cell.

Chapter 5
Masters Of Logic

I spent a year on my own in that cell, teaching myself to manipulate logic, using an oscillator and a manual I found inside the infinite bag. The process of manipulating logic is not too superficially dissimilar from magic, leading me to suspect that the magicians of old were just masters of logic.

Anyway logic manipulation works on the principle that everything vibrates on a quantum level and these resonant frequencies tell you something about the logic involved. Over the years in many universes mad men have tried to change the resonant frequency of quantum fields and through trial and error, once in the lifetimes of a trillion universes a frequency will be found that does change the quantum field. After a trillion nothingness years a pallet of 30 basic frequencies or spells was found and from there a science grew. This science was then stolen whole to be used by the Logicios. Incidentally a nothingness year is apparently the life span of a really long lived universe.

As a result of the tedium of my existence by the time the SEGHAT arrived and I found out it was my birthday, I had mastered the first three basic spells. I had lined the bucket with an infinite bag, had encouraged an orb of white light to appear and light the place and could unlock the door using logic but did not bother most days. When I heard the stammering ‘Sh!’ and felt wind gush as a shed materialised within the room, I was busy trying to change the colour of an infinite bag. I did not look up from my work as I heard footsteps behind me but then I heard his voice.

“I am impressed, most humans struggle to even accept the concept and here you are mastering its nuances.”

I did not think I just turned and leapt at the Farsh-nuke. I slammed his head against the wall.

“Come now, is that really how you want to remember your birthday.” said the Unleasher from behind my back

I left the Farsh-nuke and turned to the Unleasher. She was dressed in a leather jacket, Forbidden Planet tshirt and denim jeans. She’d dyed her hair but still wore a collar.

“Unleasher! I-”

“An unexpected pleasure is it not?” interrupted the Farsh-nuke. “We thought that for your birthday we might treat you to a party on the moons of Santaginus V and well, the Unleasher here rather wanted to see you.”

I snarled. “Shut up, Farsh-nuke!”

The Unleasher took my hand. “We come from ten years in the future, perhaps a bit more. The Logicios realised years after my execution that they might need him so they took him out of time. That is where he comes from.”

I looked over at the Farsh-nuke, he did weirdly seem to look forty but I suppose it was hard enough keeping track of the Farsh-nuke existing in another body with another personality that I rather forgot ageing happened to him.

“And you? What about you?” I said.

“I served my time then a bit more. The Logicios found it a bit hard to resist the idea of keeping the Farsh-nuke as a pet. Then after that I was called out to perform a few solo missions, on my last I met you and him. That is when I started talking to him about doing something for you.” She said.

I looked back to the Farsh-nuke “And you are okay with this? Setting up your future self with the man who killed you?”

The Farsh-nuke shrugged. “Carpe diem.”

I laughed.

The Unleasher grabbed my hand and said. “I have missed you.”

“Likewise.”

We ran into the SEGHAT and the Farsh-nuke only narrowly made it inside before the stammering started.

That is how it began, every night for the next 10 years I would go off travelling with the Unleasher. We would save worlds and universes then enjoy each other. I grew to enjoy

my last suppers and even the Farsh-nuke's involvement, inside or outside the SEGHAT. If my nights were filled with adventure. My days were filled with welcome domesticity, by which I mean mastering logic manipulation.

After a year I had convinced an infinite bag stretched over the bed to mimic the bed I had at home. By the fourth year I had made a quantum oscillator appear out of thin air. With the increased precision I was able to experiment with more complex tasks. I ate a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings that year and was only slightly ill, although of course on Christmas, the Unleasher took me to a universe where Father Christmas was real.

In year 5 the Unleasher proposed to me on a diamond planet. I spent that year practising my art by creating the wedding paraphernalia out of logic. We got married in the nothingness, a realm where logic and law hold no sway. It was a small reception, just Sarah, the guys from the government, my parents, and I think the Farsh-nuke's dad but his cosplay seemed a little too good if you get my meaning. A dalek acted as our vicar, apparently he was another incarnation of the Farsh-nuke.

In year 6, I conjured a hamster, its cage and the food it would need in one go. By the year's end I had conjured a duplicate of the Unleasher out of thin air. I had not intended for the logically created Unleasher to know she had just been created out of thin air but she was not fooled.

"You canny git!" She had said as she surveyed herself in the mirror, then turned to address me. "You were going to replace me with the real Unleasher were you not?"

"I am sure I do not know what you mean." I had said as the SEGHAT materialised and the real Unleasher stepped out.

The Unleasher approached her duplicate and began examining her.

"Fascinating! She is just as I was when we first met."

The Unleasher's duplicate spun around so her real self could get a better look at her. "I know, he's done an awfully good job."

The real Unleasher turned to me and said. "I hope you were not thinking of leaving me for her, I can dye my hair back again you know?"

I floundered somewhat. "Umm, er, no, of course not, no!"

The Unleasher's duplicate patted the real her on the back. "Do not worry, he just wanted to save you the punishment."

"Oh!" said the Unleasher. "You wanted her to be a pet?"

I squirmed, this was the most awkward situation I had ever been in and it did not help that the Unleasher's duplicate was naked.

The Unleasher turned to her duplicate and began stroking her neck. "Do you accept that you are not me?"

"Of course." said the duplicate.

"That I own the Unleasher?"

"Yes."

"That my husband has created you to be a pet?"

"Absolutely."

"Then how do you feel about becoming ours?"

"How could I disobey those eyes?"

The real Unleasher smiled. "Good girl!"

I watched with fascination, my embarrassment having thawed somewhat, as the Unleasher's hand tightened around her duplicate's neck, the duplicate pulled up her legs, the Unleasher put her arm under her duplicate's rear then moved her left hand to support the duplicate's weight fully before using her right to stroke the duplicate's face.

"I always thought I was sweet back then." said the Unleasher.

In year 7 I started using logic manipulation for the kind of cheap tricks some confuse with superpowers. Levitation, freezing air, creating fire balls, seeing where light cannot, even minor temporal jumps. By the end of the year I had learned to use logic to travel to and from the nothingness.

In year 8 I experimented with curses and temporal time bombs.

In year 9 I convinced the Unleasher to let me have custody of her duplicate and when I got bored of practising magic she would cheer me up.

The final year passed in boredom, the last month consisting of prison as its supposed to be since anything left behind could change the course of history.

I did have one thing to occupy my time though, namely thinking about just how the Farsh-nuke would be overthrown and what part I would have in it. I imagined an endless game of cat and mouse. I imagined chess, poker and blackjack, car chases, shoot outs and standoffs. I did not imagine that I would wake up one day to a knock at my cell door. I especially did not imagine that the Farsh-nuke himself would be behind it, nor that he would enter it pleading for help.

I blinked. “Sorry?”

“You have got to help me! The Septagonoids are invading and the Logicios say they will only help if I demolish my own conspiracy!” cried the Farsh-nuke.

“Then do it.”

“I have spent the last ten years trying to prevent it, I had hoped you would be doing the opposite.”

“I do beg your pardon?”

“I am not a fool, I know Sod’s law would gladly have given me an ironic death had I not included a trapdoor in the system, you are that trap door.”

“Pro tip: Tell your trapdoor he is a trapdoor next time you bank your life on him.”

“Very funny! Now would you at least try and help me?”

“Why should I help you? You are a mass murdering cannibalistic dictator!”

“You would let 42 billion people die to prove a point?”

“How many billions of people did the Farsh-nuke’s former friend let die to prove a point? Nope, it does not work.”

“All right!” said the Farsh-nuke. “I suppose I do not exactly deserve your help but you are free to go.”

I strode out the door, signed out of prison, collected my meagre belongings then ran into a man with a very extravagant hat.

“Hello!” I said cheerily then pointed to the Farsh-nuke. “Arrest that alien!”

It took a while for me to get orientated but I found myself at Parliament in good time. I blagged my way in then cried. “CONPIRACY!!!”

Men started making their way towards me, I made my way to the speakers podium. “The Sylph race is a lie! The Sylph pill is a placebo! Men are killing and eating mothers and daughters because of government sponsored mints! Cannibalism is an affront to all humanity!”

The men were getting close now. “Also the Farsh-nuke is an alien from beyond the universe! He became his own mother, owned her then killed her! I know because I am married to the Farsh-nuke and his fanny tastes minty fresh!”

Guns were being primed now. “If you do not believe me! If you still think murder, cannibalism and slavery are even tolerable then not only do you deserve to die in the coming judgement of the human race but maybe you might reconsider upon seeing this!”

I vanished from the universe as gun shots fired. The Unleasher was waiting for me in the nothingness, she gave me my Quantum Oscillator and the card, which seemed strangely broken in this place.

“You are about to jump ahead of me.” She said. “Our timelines will cease to be synced”

“I will always love you, you know? Even when you are him?” I said.

“You can not know that.”

“I am a simple man, you have been everything for me, I will not forget that.”

“It will not be the same.”

“Maybe not but it might be better?”

She laughed. “Goodbye, old friend and god speed!”

“So long, my love.”

I re-entered the universe as men in forensics suits were busily examining the speaker’s podium.

“Believe me yet?” I asked.

I aimed the oscillator skyward and a plum of fire scorched the ceiling. They did not seem to impressed so I switched settings and tried again.

“You have done it again!” said the woman in amazement then she strode over to me and slapped me. “Would you please stop magically creating naked duplicates of myself!?”

“Sorry my darling.” I said “But I have got to collapse a global conspiracy that has been running for ten years, I need all the help I can get. I would change the template but why try and improve on perfection?”

“You little flirt.”

I laughed then created a portal connecting me to television centre and stepped through. I arrived on the set of BBC24, a 24 hour rolling news channel.

“This just in! It is judgement day as Septagonoids and Logicios roam the streets! The great Farsh-nuke can help you by abdicating and taking down the conspiracy he has created!”

I created another duplicate of the Unleasher.

“It is vital that you understand that cannibalism, murder and slavery is wrong!”

The Unleasher duplicate glared daggers at me. “This is such a breach of privacy! Producing me from the logic of the air like that!”

I smiled awkwardly. “Honey, I know you have literally just been born but we are on the BBC so try and have some tact. I need you to explain to Simon and Diane here just why I and the Farsh-nuke come from beyond the universe and how cannibalism, murder and

slavery is wrong!"

"Okay!" said the duplicate "And should I also explain the double standards involved in preaching respect for all life and the importance of respecting human rights, even among sylphs, when you yourself create and dismiss life as readily!?"

"Oh god yes! I am like totally evil and stuff. Tell them why."

I turned to the camera then said. "Sorry for this interruption to your scheduled viewing but the fate of the world and the human race kind of rests in the balance, hence why I sort of feel that creating clones via logic manipulation is justified. Now, if you will excuse me, I need to repeat this activity on Sky."

I created my portal beneath my feet and did just that. Much the same thing happened all the other times. At midday I appeared on every single tv channel and created an Unleasher duplicate and each time indicated where I would be going next. I repeated this for every radio station, every youtube channel and every cinema. It took a year to do and I think I created a billion clones. After I had done all this I retired to the Prime Minister's sitting room where the Farsh-nuke was waiting for me.

He turned off the tv. "You are more powerful than I ever realized. Did you mean it?"

"Yes, cannibalism, murder and slavery is wrong." I said.

"I mean, do you really come from the nothingness as well?"

"No, but I am very good friends with someone who is."

He chuckled and I glared at him "And you killed her in cold blood. You murdered my wife, Farsh-nuke, and I can never forgive you for that."

"I did not know."

"As if that matters? You murdered your own mother in cold blood and thought there would not be consequences? That is not just cold, that is not just insane, that is not just monumentally stupid, that is why you deserve to suffer like Oedipus and have your crimes catch up with you!"

"If you hate me so much then why are you here?"

“I am here for the boy I used to know and the woman I fell in love with. No one deserves to die alone and I am damned if I am gonna let you go without you knowing that you will be loved.”

The Farsh-nuke left the arm chair to get himself some port.

As he decanted he said. “You came to be here for me in death and to be sure that I die.” He downed the glass of port and poured himself another. “If I am mother, owner, pet and killer then you are my husband, friend and executioner.”

I could not help but smirk at his summation. “Oedipus has nothing on us.”

The Farsh-nuke drained his glass again. “Perhaps we should stop by Freud’s sometime for marriage counselling?”

“How do you know we haven’t?”

“True but somehow I doubt I would get such a smile if we had. Anyway, how do you think it will happen?”

“Freud’s? Oh I am sure we would just end up trolling him with alien dick jokes.”

He took the Port as he strode to sit on the sofa with me.

I caught the look in his eyes then said. “You are not talking about a session at Freud’s are you?”

“No.” He looked me in the eyes. “I am talking about death. My death. I have always known it would come. For as long as I have been alive I have known that my days were numbered, that every step I took was a step towards my own destruction, I just never thought it would end like this.”

“You never thought your best friend and future husband would execute you as robots and men in silly hats thought a war across the world over whether murder, cannibalism and slavery should be illegal? Shocker!”

“I never thought I would want to die.” He downed a glass.

I looked at him and beckoned with my hand, he passed me a filled tumbler.

I downed it.

He topped me up.

I knocked it back and we each stared at the photos on the wall.

After a while he said. “When I was a boy I dreamed of making these men look like incompetent idiots, now they look like saints.”

I grunted and silence fell over us like a comforting blanket once more then I asked. “Why did you do it? What made you raise an army to fix the voting then form a global conspiracy centred on cannibalism and dictatorship?”

Silence fell but not for long as the Farsh-nuke said. “The Farsh-nuke was a mistake, a semi-sentient universe with ideas above its station. You see logic had to do a bit of evolving between the first logical thought to the first logic bubble or universe. As it evolved it eradicated pieces of nothingness from its code. The Farsh-nuke thought and felt as a logical being but he was unbound by their laws. He was also quite, quite mad and did quite a few evil things. Eventually logical beings that protected life got sick of the Farsh-nuke using people as toys so they made him stand trial, imprisoning him with his own logic. They used reason and morality to convince him he should die and he almost let them but his will to survive was too strong. He convinced his executioner to save his essence and exile it to life in a logic bubble. The Farsh-nuke was executed but his mind, his soul, the core logic of his being, was extracted and placed into a child. Logic took over and there were many children who grew up with the Farsh-nuke hiding inside their heads, some went unnoticed, some went mad and some learned to channel the power of the Farsh-nuke.”

The Farsh-nuke fell silent.

I said. “That much I knew, or at least I got the gist but what happened? Why did the Farsh-nuke’s evil streak suddenly flare up?”

He gulped down some port. “I had no parents, I am not entirely sure I even had a home originally. I turned to you as a role model, a figure of guidance. It was not intentional, it just sort of happened, like how a baby chick is imprinted on by someone.”

“I have a feeling you are going to be experiencing that sensation again soon.”

“Probably. Anyway I saw you as my teacher, my guardian and all the while there was this

war going on inside my head about what is right and wrong. I wanted to impress you, to please you. Even as my life began to unravel around me, I wanted to make you happy. Then my balls dropped and a nuclear bomb hit my perception of what is right and wrong, what is normal and what is not. Hormones make you question the world as it is but I had a devil inside my mind and no parents or guardians to turn to."

"And I cut you off when you most needed me, the closest thing you had to a guardian and I rejected you as a horrible monster."

"I was. What I have just said may explain but it will never excuse what I have done."

"I know." I said and we fell silent once more.

"So how do you think it will happen then?" said the Farsh-nuke "I want to prepare my famous last words."

I shrugged. "What would you do?"

"How would I commit suicide? Probably in the most ghastly way possible. Perhaps I would tie my lower intestine to Tower Bridge with a grenade in my heart and the pin pulled out when my intestine was removed? Then I would bungee jump with my own organs acting as the bungee, the pin would be pulled and I would free fall like a bleeding human rocket for a few seconds before going all Kaboom!"

"Okay, no, that is probably not what is going to happen. How would you kill the Unleasher?"

"How would I murder my best friend's wife? Not really expecting an answer are you?"

"The Unleasher exists because they wanted you to suffer how your victims did so tell me how you would kill her, if you had not already shot her in the head?"

"Oh, in that case I would probably sever her neck. It is like cutting off someone's head but you keep the bone intact"

"Then you have your answer, my friend."

"The Great Farsh-nuke will be slaughtered so he might become his own pet."

"Seems that way."

“Seems oddly appropriate.” he said cheerily then flicked on the TV.

On screen Simon, a slightly northern looking bloke, and Diane, who could have modelled lingerie for Lidl, were interviewing two Unleasher duplicates.

“So you were both created out of thin air by the Farsh-nuke’s husband, is that right?” asked Diane.

“Well, actually the Farsh-nuke oscillated the resonant frequencies of the logic where we were created and it was this resonant manipulation of logic that recreated us.” said the duplicate nearest Simon.

“They’re tv presenters. They’re used to chitchatting with David Tennant about his new role in Shameless Remake 43, not talking quantum physics. Quit trying to talk sense and speak in terms they can understand.” said the duplicate nearest Diane.

“All right.” said the duplicate nearest Simon. “The Farsh-nuke’s husband is a great magician and he waved his magic wand so we appeared. Now seriously murder, cannibalism and slavery are wrong.”

Simon asked. “So what are you going to do now? I mean what happens once the world is saved? Do you just vanish?”

The duplicate nearest Simon stared incredulously at him. The duplicate nearest Diane said. “I might put myself up for auction.”

The duplicate nearest Simon turned to stare incredulously at her but the duplicate nearest Diane was clearly having none of it. “Look, I am sorry equality is great and everything but we were literally created out of nowhere, we do not officially exist. I would rather I was pampered pooch than a prisoner or lab rat.”

The duplicate nearest Simon sighed. “I suppose I might give myself to one of the Doctors then? Man, I used to love that show.”

The Farsh-nuke flicked to the BBC one. The 6 O’clock news was just starting.

Mick Pitbull said. “Yes, hello and welcome to the news. It has been an eventful news day and I believe we can go live now to William Carlisle outside Number 10.”

William Carlisle said. “Yes hello and welcome to number 10, it has been a very historic day.”

I and the Farsh-nuke were not really paying attention to what he was saying, we just gaped like Goldfish.

“He has still got the hat!” cried the Farsh-nuke in amazement.

William Carlisle was reporting to camera whilst looking behind him to see a load of policemen in riot gear with a battering ram. “Yes and I believe they are ready to breakdown the door now! Just to clarify the Farsh-nuke will be extradited to a safe house then be made to stand trial for his crimes in secret! And here they go-!”

The Farsh-nuke flicked off the tv then said. “Quietly or loudly?”

“We gotta convince them you’re pure evil!” I pointed out as I got up.

As we left, the Farsh-nuke said. “Bring the port!”

We strode through the corridor and the policemen stormed in, I twitched the oscillator and they were thrown back outside as if jerked back on cables.

“AND STAY OUT!!!” boomed the Farsh-nuke as we strode towards the front door.

“Hello peasants!” sneered the Farsh-nuke. “Come any closer and my husband will triplicate the flammability of the port!”

I held up the Port, my oscillator primed on it.

“I hear you have finally figured out that mint imperials do not absolve murder, cannibalism and slavery after all! Surprised it took you this long really! Anyway, the game is up now! You have 5 minutes before I personally wipe out every last one of you!”

A squad of policemen in riot gear charged at us, I threw the port and buzzed it. A massive fireball appeared amongst their masses.

The Farsh-nuke boomed angrily. “DID YOU THINK I WAS JOKING!!!?”

Another squad ran so I stowed the oscillator, I was in the mood for some fighting and besides we needed to seem like badasses.

A wall of carbon fiber charged towards me and I jumped, easily landing on top of the riot shields. As I hit the deck, the Farsh-nuke ploughed through the breach in their defences, knocking every third man to the floor. I climbed to my feet and started ploughing into the crowd.

“Just like old times.” I said.

He laughed. “I always used to make you fight my battles for me.” He knocked a policeman out with a punch.

“I fought for your name gladly.” I said as I thumped a policewoman in the neck, knocking her out.

“That warms my heart” said the Farsh-nuke as he lifted a skinny policeman up and threw him at his comrades.

The ground started to shake and we both looked up to see a tank trundling down White Hall.

“Stuff this for a game of soldiers!” bellowed the Farsh-nuke in response.

“We do not have to!” I said, indicating the Septagonoids coming from the right and the Logicios coming from the left.

“Can we take them?” He said.

“We can try.” I said.

He looked at me and nodded as I did likewise then we stopped beating up policemen and strode toward the three forces of aggression.

“He who takes the Farsh-nuke, takes the world, well bad news everyone because guess who?” I muttered.

The Farsh-nuke bellowed “Today I die! Today my empire crumbles! Today I lose! But I am not giving up without a fight!”

“Hello, Farsh-nuke!” said a man in a silly hat.

He had appeared right beside us.

I was amazed. “You are a master of logic!”

“Yes.” He said.

“What on earth are you doing here!?” cried the Farsh-nuke.

“You created a global conspiracy, elected yourself dictator then made cannibalism the natural order of things, did you honestly think I would not stop by?” said the man.

“Well 10 years did pass” said the Farsh-nuke.

“Sorry.” I said. “But how do you guys know each other?”

The Farsh-nuke shrugged. “The guy executed and exiled me.”

“Well, come on, Custer.” I said. “You have got a destiny to fulfill.”

“I have to die so she can live? Very well, lay on, MacDuff!”

We each grabbed the executor’s hands then there was a trial.

It took place over a week in a minimalist glasshouse. The Farsh-nuke was sentenced to become the Unleasher and I saw him before he underwent the knife.

The Farsh-nuke had his hands handcuffed behind his back and was sitting in a chair. He looked up as I entered. “You were right, you were always right.”

“How does it feel?” I said. “Knowing that you are about to become something so much better?”

“It feels terrifying. Ordinarily a person’s essence continues when they regenerate. They might seem a whole lot different but they are just a continuation of the same person’s journey but they are going to artificially force my next incarnation to be the Unleasher. They will carve the perfect pet from my corpse.”

“Is that not a comfort though? To not have to worry about being a pet?”

“I will miss you, I will miss those years. It feels like I have only just found you again and

now I have to die."

I sat down opposite him and stared at my oldest friend. "You are about to become the sweetest, kindest, kinkiest, most badass woman in the history of the universe and you are going to be spending an awful lot of time with me. Unleasher, if I never get a chance to say this again, I love you."

I left the Farsh-nuke's cell as I felt myself begin to tear up.

An hour later the Farsh-nuke was executed, his throat severed and his blood drained into a vat. His executor was the same as when he was exiled, apparently people called him Kneale after the Nigel Kneale tv plays about Bernard Quatermass.

"What an awfully tangential name?" I said.

"Better than yours." He said with a snort of laughter.

I was dropped off outside my house that I hadn't used in 10 years, I turned the key in the lock, fell over the mountain of junk mail. shut the door then collapsed onto the bed.

That night I cried myself to sleep.

The next day I got up, picked out some clothes from the wardrobe. A mismatched suit formed from the things that would fit. I made myself some tea and a bacon buttie, which I enjoyed whilst trawling through some of the junk mail then I strode out and locked the front door. I walked down the lane and found him waiting beside the shed.

He wore brown brogues, tartan trousers, a question mark waistcoat, a brown jacket, a brown paisley tie and a brown scarf. Perched atop his head was a straw hat and in his hands rested a red question mark handled umbrella.

"You've been waiting a long time" I said.

"Oh ,I keep myself busy." He said.

"Do you-? I mean is it-? Are you-?"

He placed a finger to his lips then said. "While the mysteries of the Farsh-nuke may be mostly resolved, the riddle of the Unleasher has barely even had its surface scratched."

“And what of the duplicate?”

He clicked his fingers and the Unleasher’s duplicate bounded out of the SEGHAT, like a puppy keen to see its owner again.

“It’s you” She said. “I always knew you’d be back! Are you going to come travelling with us?”

“Maybe, Honey, but first we’ve got an alien invasion to repel.” I pointed out.

The duplicate looked to the Farsh-nuke pleadingly.

“Oh, very well, get your leash and travel bag.” said the Farsh-nuke.

I glared at the Farsh-nuke. “Haven’t learned much have you?”

“You made her, I merely grew accustomed to her company and I’ve never really had the heart to tell her she needn’t be a pet any more, she seems to enjoy it so.”

The Unleasher ran out and gave me her leash and travel bag. In that instant I quite understood where he was coming from. The three of us strode off to take on the Septagonoids.

Chapter 6
Septagonoids

A Septagonoid is emotionless. It has no pain or fear and thus no reason for violence and rage. A Septagonoid is not just driven by twisted logic it is twisted logic, or rather it’s logic in hindsight, that 20/20 vision of logic that logic would see if it looked back on the time it owned, raised then murdered itself. The Septagonoids exist because everything that ever was, will be or won’t be happened by accident.

Logic states that nothing is a void. Complete Nothingness however lacks logic, lacks definition and eventually that lack of definition started to create definition. This definition was at first represented by the Green Nothingness coming into being, in all its infinite, eternal and green majesty.

From the great green nothingness came every single universe that ever was. There are universes in the green nothingness for every possible quantum state for every particle in the entire universe at any moment in time and that’s before we get to the subject of

keystreams. You see for every universe there is another with fiction coincidently depicting your every breath. That means that even demigods that can stop time and be indestructible can at any moment be killed off in the most embarrassing manner possible because it turns out they're now fanfic/parody/written by shit writers. (I actually live in constant fear while writing this that my entire life has been the diet coke fuelled BDSM time travel sex change fantasy of a Doctor Who nerd during NaNoWriMo and I dare the bastard to keep that line in.) Keystreams are what the universes where fiction relevant to related universes is written is described as. And if there's a continuity error, i.e. an unintended discrepancy between fiction fact and fiction reality, then the Logicios will act as continuity enforcers to artificially place the continuity error into the reality of the shows reverse keystream.

The Septagonoids want to pull the rug from under the green nothingness and the crockery of life resting on it because as living logic they have realised their mistake and want to rectify the situation. They're also obsessed with Septagons, hence the name.

I'd love to say they looked menacing. I could write delightfully purple prose about how crap these guys are but instead I'll say this. If I talk about a race called the prisms and asked you to make a model of it based on that name, you would have a clearer picture and better understanding of how insanely crap they are.

The Septagonoid glided towards us, protruding claw guns aimed at us. "Doctor, what are you doing here? You said we could invade this world if we helped the daleks?"

The Farsh-nuke gave a half smile. "Haven't you seen the new series with Matt Smith, it's awfully good?"

The Septagonoid and the Farsh-nuke stared at each other in an enigmatic silence with undertones of stupidity and anger, it was going to be a long boil.

I sighed. "The Doctor lies."

The Septagonoid spun its camera bit to look at me.

The Farsh-nuke said. "Did you really think I could let you destroy my home planet."

The Septagonoid answered. "You will do it eventually, Doctor."

"Eventually makes it seem like I haven't already crossed it off my list of things to do. This is my friend by the way, why don't you introduce yourself?"

A claw swam in front of my face and opened. There was a flash of green and suddenly I knew all that crap about Septagonoids and that his name was $E=MC^2$. I grabbed hold of his arm then yanked really hard.

The Farsh-nuke called out. “Do excuse my friend but he’s awfully violent, they all are on this place.”

The Farsh-nuke took out a sonic screwdriver and said. “Including me.” Then like thunder he bellowed. “I AM NOT THE DOCTOR! I AM THE FARSH-NUKE AND YOU WILL OBEY ME!!!”

I don’t know if logic screams but if its possible then $E=MC^2$ was doing just that. Logic in a robot suit, screamed.. At first I laughed then I stopped, blinked, scratched my leg then cried. “Enough!”

The screaming stopped.

The Farsh-nuke sighed. “Took you long enough”

“I do beg your pardon.” I said.

“It was a test. If necessary I could have sustained the scream for a hundred years. I needed you to stop me.”

“You would have kept him in unimaginable agony for a century? Are you quite sure that you were once the Unleasher?”

“He’s a Septagonoid, a being made up entirely of logic. He was never in any danger, I just showed him irrefutable proof that a being made of logic was wrong and the proof of logic’s greatest fear made him scream. As a being of logic he would always immediately recover since logically the fear was wrong.”

“And what was that proof that logic is wrong?”

“Nothing you need worry about, what you do need to be concerned with is reining me in. They don’t call me the Ka Fariq Gatri for nothing.”

“You do realise that revelation rather ruins Doctor Who?”

“Oh keep up, I already answered that question.”

“I’m sorry, been a bit out of the loop, what with being imprisoned for 10 years.”

The Farsh-nuke sniffed. “Septagonoid!”

E=MC2 answered cautiously. “What is it, Doctor?”

“Tell Clarke’s third law you have killed the Doctor and I’ll let your ships leave my universe without a fight.” said the Farsh-nuke.

The Septagonoid glided away and I found myself glancing between the two of them in rapid succession.

“The mighty Septagonoids.” He laughed. “Just comic plot fodder mostly, yet another race that poses a threat to to the Green Nothingness but will never succeed.”

“Just where did you instruct the Septagonoids to help the daleks?”

The Farsh-nuke strode off in the direction of London. “Now the question you should be asking is, if the Septagonoids are so useless, why are they here?”

“Because you helped them.”

“No, time is not like that. Think of a time traveller’s life as thread going through sponge. Though the future may have plotted a course which influences the past, that past once made a similar journey on its own. One must always look at things from their earliest point.”

“Like how you kept being pushed and pulled by time?”

“But still crafted my future by myself originally.”

“If that’s so, why did you fall in love with me? I’d always assumed that once they sent you back in time then your past was changed.”

“For as long as the Unleasher’s existed, she’s had eyes for you.”

“Then what changed, why did the man I’d murdered fall in love with me?”

“I had 10 years to get bored of the female form and abandonment issues, you do the sums.”

“Oh, where are we going?”

“To get my dog back.” The Farsh-nuke threw his umbrella into the distance, there was a faint ‘whelp’ and we strode back to the SEGHAT.

Chapter 7
Revelation

I struggled against my captors, I could feel their sterile hands checking out the meat of my body and snarled. The umbrella blinded the one and knocked out the other, I picked it up and ran.

I ran straight through the SEGHAT as it dematerialised and collapsed in a heap on the grass. For centuries I had served as the Unleasher and the Farsh-nuke’s faithful pet and champion but now I was alone, without my owner, in a land I knew from memories that weren’t my own was dangerous for one such as me. I considered for a moment just giving up and accepting my fate, I was a pet, a sylph, a woman. I didn’t deserve freedom and couldn’t survive by myself.

I could see poachers approaching from three sides, they wanted me, they wanted my flesh. The sight brought to mind a memory from three centuries ago. The straits of Alzerea. We trekked across the barren landscape looking for the fabled Ungoloid Kimchara. I didn’t really know what it was or care to be honest but the fate of the nothingness probably rested on it. We came across this abandoned ruin and the Farsh-nuke suggested I keep watch while he examined it. Demon riders rode across the land towards us, spitting flames. I warned the Farsh-nuke and he said he needed time. Time I would have to buy him. So I strode out and challenged then to stop. I played chicken with a demon rider and it lashed out its tongue, drawing me beside it. It told me I was a useless sacrifice, a toy thrown to the gods by the damned. He melted as the ruin activated and cast a ray of light upon him. I was dropped and ran to the Farsh-nuke. He told me that duplicate or not I carried the fire of the Farsh-nuke within me and that’s why I hadn’t melted in the light.

The memory stirred what echo of the Farsh-nuke lay within me and I picked up the Farsh-nuke’s umbrella then ran toward my creator’s home. Frustrated that the door wasn’t open, I considered the memories that weren’t my own. They belonged to the Unleasher and I tried not to delve into them wherever possible, out of respect for my

owner but now I rifled through those memories and soon worked out where my creator was likely to keep the spare key. This found, I opened the door, closed it again once I was inside and felt that segregation and separation between mine and the Unleasher's memories blur creating a kind of mental splint to cope with the situation.

I was for a moment stuck as to what I should do when I looked to my Master's umbrella in the blind hope that it might grant some insight. That's when I noticed how curiously like a question mark it was. The umbrella was asking me to find answers to a question it did not know. Any normal person might have been fazed by such a vague task, I however was used to making do and getting called cute if I got it wrong so I looked about myself, at my creator's house and started looking for answers. It is amazing how much you can learn about civilized life if you examine the contents of an abandoned house. What's more every receipt, crisp packet and beer bottle brought back memories from the Unleasher's life and with it facets of her personality. If you doubt this then watch what happens if a man delves into the attic or garage, you can almost see them regress before your eyes.

As I regressed into the mind of that heroic/horrific genius I found myself drawn to the mountain of Junk Mail. Of course there were the usual pizza delivery company and Chinese takeaway menus but there was also a spate of new companies that delivered women fresh to your door. Other leaflets made it clear that this wasn't anything as wholesome as porn or prostitution and I refuse to give them the oxygen of publicity.

The more I read, the angrier I got. The anger changed me, I felt sick that I had let myself become one of the cattle, that intelligent freethinking women were getting such horrific treatment. I was suddenly aware of how naked I was and had been since I was created. I ran upstairs and raided my creator's wardrobe then I picked up the Umbrella and left the house.

Chapter 8
The Logicios

I entered the SEGHAT after the Farsh-nuke, he started walking round the console flicking switches. The door closed behind me and I noticed the Logicular interocittor starting up.

"Why are we in flight, Farsh-nuke?" I asked.

He idly looked up from the controls and sighed. "Yes, I forgot you knew how to fly the SEGHAT, must remember that."

He went back to the controls so I said. “We’ve left your pet behind.”

He waved away my concern. “Oh I’m sure she’ll make herself useful.”

I was finding his casual concentration very disconcerting. “Look, we’ve just met up, would you mind being more talkative?”

He caught my eye with a look for a second then went back to the controls, what little conversation we did have was forever framed by the click clack of keys and switches.

Since he was being silent I decide to try his tactic and quietly watched him as he flew the craft. Despite his stature he moved nimbly and I couldn’t help by compare the shapes of his limbs to those of his previous regeneration.

On his third rotation around the console he glanced at me and said. “The Logicios invaded my world and deposed me. Turning me into their perfect plaything as part of my punishment and their enjoyment. I’ve no doubt that had the Septagonoids not invaded then I would not have seceded. Since I sent the Septagonoids in this timeline, a force that I could easily make turn tail and run then the Logicios must have tried first with something so much worse. I need to find out what that force is and stop it.”

I glared back at the Farsh-nuke. “You want revenge.”

The Farsh-nuke stopped working the controls and turned to me. “I am very happy that you fell in love with my second earthly incarnation and that the suffering stopped on my planet but I will never ever be thankful for death, not even my own, not even if it means becoming your wife. The Logicios extradited then killed me. No-one should have that power.”

“Except you?”

“Except you.”

I found myself suddenly fascinated by my shoes and heard the reassuring click clack as the Farsh-nuke got back to flying the SEGHAT. I looked up and watched as he piloted it. It had been a while but I recognised the manoeuvre he was pulling easy enough. Figuring out what was intended took a little longer but once I started analysing his movement around the console and the controls he was using, it came back to me easily enough.

“You’re setting the SEGHAT to drop us off then rematerialise elsewhere under HADS aren’t you?”

He looked up at me. “HADS, Hostile Action Displacement System.”

“I know what it means.”

He muttered grumpily. “I wasn’t talking to you.”

I ignored the comment and turned to face the door as we landed. He took off his hat, placed it on the top of the Logicular Interocitter and patted the console before we left the SEGHAT.

Naturally we stepped out into a room full of armed men in silly hats.

“Logicios, I presume?” I said.

“Three words: Autons, Sylphs, Daleks, Septagonoids, Dragons.”

I glanced at the Farsh-nuke. “Is that supposed to be some kind of bizarre odd one out?”

His lip curled into a snarl so I looked back to the convention of armed Logicios and raised my Quantum Oscillator. “Pow, mother fuckers!”

Precisely nothing happened so I jammed the button furiously. Eventually the Logicio with the most ornate hat said. “Your device works by oscillating the essential harmonics of the universe and thereby manipulating logic. You are currently on a Logicio ship floating within the nothingness. Obviously we maintain a logic field on this ship but it only allows certain specified activities. You cannot hack our reality with your toy but never the less we will be keeping it for the duration of your internment.”

The Logicio was now in front of me, holding out his hand expectantly, so I gave it to him and the Logicios overpowered I and the Farsh-nuke, taking us to separate cells.

Chapter 9
Uprising

I arrived at a drab grey building and recalled that this was where I- my owner, the Farsh-nuke had worked for a time. I entered the office and the male receptionist shot me with a dart, I stumbled and he ran out to catch me then dragged me behind reception. Once

hidden behind the desk I pulled out the dart and shoved it into his hand. He passed out in a second and I pinched his pass then caught the lift down to the Farsh-nuke's office.

I saw him as I approached the office, My owner's old boss. He wanted me bad. I ran into my owner's office and was only just through the door when he grabbed me. He lifted me up and closed the door behind him. He started seducing me, badly, but I played along. He laid me out on a chesterfield sofa and I let him undress me then try and strangle me. After his fifth attempt, I asked "Couldn't we just have fucked?" Then I kneed him in the bullocks.

He rolled off the sofa and onto his back, I stood over him and said. "My name is the Unleasher and I belong to the Farsh-nuke. You used to be such a good man but now look at you? Murdering women you find wandering your corridors? You're despicable!"

"Please!" He said. "Don't hurt me!"

"If you move, you're dead." I said.

He did as I bid while I got dressed then I locked the door and stabbed the tip of my umbrella where it hurt most, he said nothing.

"You men remove women's humanity! You treat them as cattle! Well, it ends now!"

He nodded swiftly, terrified. "Just! Just don't hurt me!"

I patted him down and as I did so I found three things of interest: A scalpel, chlorophyll some sterilising ointment.

"What were you going to do?"

He refused to speak so I twisted the umbrella. "What were you going to do!?"

He laughed. "I was actually going eat you alive, quite funny really."

I stripped him then bound him with a fourth Doctor scarf, it doubling as a gag. I strapped him to a chair, his legs restrained, then I sliced off his balls, sterilised the wound then bound his undercarriage in the fourth Doctor scarf.

It was as I performed this eugenics that I heard her.

“You are the Farsh-nuke’s pet, the Unleasher’s duplicate and the unknown’s creation.”

Sarah told me her story then I freed her and she dressed in my attacker’s clothing, gladly carrying his gun and we both manhandled him up into her cage then locked it.

“This feels good.” said Sarah.

“To be free?” I asked.

“To be at the head of an uprising.”

“Oh.”

“So where were you planning on striking first?”

“America ideally.”

“Good, do you know how to parachute?”

“Why?”

Sarah smiled.

We brought a parachute for each of us from an army surplus store along with a very convincing bomb. Next I used a standard oscillator to create two infinite bags, and we stuffed our cloths and supplies in these then kept them under our tongues. We each wore carefully chosen bikinis and flip flops, printed out fake boarding passes and waited in the queue for India and France respectively. Inevitably we were chatted up by blokes going to America and we played the dumb sylphs so they’d take us on the plane.

We approached checkout and the checkout clerk checked their boarding passes then said. “Any carry on luggage?”

He looked to me, his arm already protectively around me. “Just one for the flight.”

I smiled, trying to hide any sign of cynicism.

“Put her on the scales.” said the clerk.

He lifted me up and placed me in a metal tray. There was a bleep then the clerk

wrapped a label round my arm. He lifted me back out and as we walked away, he said "You're a good weight, slim but meaty too."

I could almost hear his lips smacking.

Once we started down the gangway to get on the plane itself he picked me up and threw away my flip flops but kept my bikini in his pocket saying. "You're not gonna need those any more."

I smiled once more and felt my resolve strengthening, I sat on his lap through out the flight, he brought me a mini diet coke and a sylph choco bar, made with the fat of dead sylphs. As we reached the last half hour of the journey I was instructed to enter the aisle while he unbuckled then he led me by the hand to the sylph slaughter room. Every plane has one these days, even Ryan Air but you have to pay to use theirs.

I waited until he had the blade positioned just so behind my neck then I kicked him in the balls with my heal, slipped out from under him, chopped him in the neck and beat him to the floor.

He was bleeding and and crying. "What's the matter? I thought you knew, I thought you were okay with it."

"You thought I was okay with losing my independence and being eaten by a low life such as you?" I said then I picked him up off the floor, placed his head over the rim of the vat, positioned the knife just so then sliced down and around, slicing off his head whilst keeping it on the bone. I waited for him to stop trying to speak then I removed his shoes and socks and hung him on hooks from his feet above a drain.

I slipped the infinite bag out from under my tongue then re-clothed and armed myself. I stepped out in full terrorist gear and cried. "My name is the Unleasher, this is an uprising and you are all going to die."

I fired three blanks and the screaming/texting started.

I made my way to the cockpit, snapping the necks of anyone who tried to stop me. Once inside I murdered every pilot and began to hack the flight computer. Once the new coordinates were locked in, I climbed outside and hung to the undercarriage of the plane. I didn't bother myself with the politics of what I was doing, for now all I had to worry about was jumping off at the right moment if it was shot down. Flight Controllers would no doubt know by now that my plane was approaching the White House but with

no terrorist on board and the pilots dead they would have a tough decision and the longer they thought about the problem, the closer I got towards it.

I saw the missile as it approached and smiled grimly, the Feds were doing my job for me, I let go and fell for 3 seconds before I opened my chute and was carried so much closer towards my target. I had to detach the parachute as a hail of bullets headed towards me and ducked into a roll upon my landing. I hurriedly climbed out of my clothes and piled them back into my infinite bag and stowed it as I slipped into my bikini.

When the Feds got to me they asked if I'd seen anything, I said no but they took me back to their station for further inquiries where they proceeded to undress and draw on me, debating among themselves who got to have my bet cuts of meat. Again I waited until I was actually about to be killed before I fought back. I had miscalculated though as the five Federal Officers held me down while one of their number began slicing into my neck.

Suddenly the guy cutting into me stopped with a groan and slumped back in his chair.

"Gareth?" called one of the Feds.

I wasted no time. I pickrd up the knife and chopped off a guy's hand before the others let go.

"My name is Sarah Lockehart" said whoever had killed the man slicing into me. "And this is an uprising!"

She swiftly shot each one of them in the head and I rearmed myself and redressed myself, collecting the bikinis from the corpses again.

The Federal Office was the one on the White House campus and we bust our way in using the tried and tested technique of being badass then acting as willing lambs led to slaughter. We killed all in our way but when we found the president we castrated him and put a collar and leash on him. I then hacked the White House security system and triggered the Emergency Broadcast System which meant every TV and Radio Station was now showing a live feed from the White House.

"I am the Unleasher." I said.

"And I am Sarah Lockehart." said Sarah.

“We are sylphs!” We said as one. “We belong to the Farsh-nuke! We are pets but we are equals! Sylphs are people too! This is an uprising! If you will murder us without reproach then so will we! Sylphs across the world, rise up against your oppressors! Stay their pets if you wish but murder cannot be tolerated!”

I added. “Your president is now a sylph also! He is a pet! Do unto us as you would have done to him!”

I and Sarah changed back into our bikinis, stowed our clothing and weaponry then the military bust in and shot us all dead.

Chapter 10
Break out

I sat in my cell and stared at the blank wall for an hour, whistling.

The Farsh-nuke asked. “What are you doing?”

“Resonating concrete.” I replied.

He burst into a fit of hysterics. “Seriously though?”

“Seriously though. You left me in a prison cell for 10 years.”

“I kept you busy at nights though.”

“10 years staring at walls, resonating reality. You think I never once tried it acapella?”

“We’re on a Logicio ship. The logic is specially designed so it can’t be hacked”

“How many computers are exactly the same in intention but easily hacked?”

“Quite a few.”

“Exactly, so shut up and let me resonate.”

As I whistled I was faintly aware of the Farsh-nuke humming in tune with me. With the Farsh-nuke echoing me it began to be easier to harmonize and after a few hours the doors popped open. I stepped out with the Farsh-nuke and we made our way to the

office where my oscillator was kept.

A gruff Logicio greeted us as we broke down the door. As the Farsh-nuke spoke to the gorilla in a strange suit I found myself fascinated with the 12 inch sylph sitting chained in an orb on his desk.

“Hello!” said the Farsh-nuke brightly. “We’ve just come for our things and I’d rather like to know why the Logicios are so interested in my planet.”

“Don’t I know you?” asked the gorilla.

The Farsh-nuke gave one of his half smiles. “Probably.” Then he removed his pocket watch and started it spinning before the gorilla’s eyes. “Anyway it’s vitally important that I know what the Logicios are doing on on my planet. Tell me.”

The gorilla muttered. “It’s you. Once you stopped hiding behind your William Dickson Wright persona, they were able to trace your thought patterns and when they saw what you had done. Turning your planet into a breeding ground for perfect sylphs they decided to kill three birds with one stone. Reform your character, gain a toy and gain a new supply for prime sylph.”

“Isn’t that-” I said.

The Farsh-nuke stilled then stowed his pocket watch, picked up the Oscillator and bustling me out of the door.

“Who was that?” I said.

“You know who that was.” said the Farsh-nuke.

I sighed and we left the prison, trudging through the corridors.

“Can you use that?” asked the Farsh-nuke.

“The Quantum Oscillator?” I queried,

“Yes, yes, your doodad mahflipjig, can you use it?”

“Well in theory all I have to do is work out the difference between the usual frequencies and the current ones for unlocking two doors and the rest should scale accordingly but I

may have to be careful, there might be booby traps."

"How can there be booby traps in logic?"

That question threw me. "You're asking me?"

He rolled his eyes. "Answer the question."

I shrugged "Well if the logic is controlled by computers to be unhackable then there are probably a few erroneous lines of code that'll track down the source of the logicular disruption and unleash something unspeakably deadly upon it."

"Interesting, go on?"

"I think it's highly likely that they've at least got a class 3 security system. Which explains why they're so lax about security, if the reality of space itself can detect then spontaneously create a blast of lava or freezing water at the source then why bother with guards?"

The Farsh-nuke smiled. "Now that is interesting, well done."

"If you say so."

We trudged on in silence for a moment passing cages, grey walls, employee of the month framed photos and windows over looking a landscape of green. Tedium does not describe how I felt as I walked those corridors.

Eventually I asked. "Where are we going?"

"Further than we've ever gone before."

"I've seen the Ice Tombs of Tangroya, dealt cards with the Femstrait on Megalos V, played the Casvan for the Umbrelloid Charter and felt deaths fingers down my throat in the sewers of Celestia, you think you can surprise me on a spaceship outside the universe?"

"Death, destruction, spectacle, we've seen it all. Poverty on the other hand is something I've tried to hide you from. There is more torment and suffering amid the under classes of humanity than any alien invasion has ever caused and the Logicios make the human race look like children by comparison."

“Poverty is not something we deal with though, not normally. We leave that to the missionaries and the social workers. It’s our job to protect the people, what the people do to themselves is none of our business.”

“And that’s what we tell ourselves as we try to sleep at night. We say it’s not our job, that evolution must be allowed to happen, that we can’t save everyone. They might even be valid arguments out of context but the Logicios are in our homes, marching down our streets, desecrating our monuments. They’ve got our sisters, mothers, brothers and fathers.”

“Concubines, prostitutes, cattle and pets?”

“You think it’ll stop? You think the Logicios will put an end to the tyranny and cannibalism? The only reason they made you break down the conspiracy is that with the planet in disarray the takeover will be easier, that and they have a rather disgusting appetite for feasting on the condemned. My conspiracy gave children hope, with that gone the human race will be helpless.”

“Are you seriously trying to tell me you were being kind to those you subjugated?”

“I may have wanted to do unspeakable things to a woman but I never wanted to remove her humanity.”

“You just wanted the legal right to do with her as you wished?”

The Farsh-nuke fell silent, stopped then opened a door. He strode in and I followed, shutting the door behind me. We stood on a gantry overlooking a bizarre cross between a prison and a battery farm.

“The whole place is contained within an infinite bag that lines the cupboard.” said the Farsh-nuke quietly.

I stared at the scene below and noticed small familial groups. Mothers and daughters talking to each other, you could tell by the way people held themselves and the way they expressed themselves.

“Each cupboard contains 10 billion breeding sylphs. Once their hatchlings meet maturity they are led out to be processed. Many are killed for food and material produce, some are trained to become soldiers on frontier universes or companions for newly promoted

Logicio Agents, some are chosen to become concubines, prostitutes or pets."

The Farsh-nuke kept narrating as I watched and that's when I noticed the mother lay an egg. I turned to the Farsh-nuke and he sighed. "These are proper sylphs, created by the juices of the Albino Sylph Squirrel. They were designed as a method of preserving a race that could no longer survive on either of the first two ways and had to be kept alive by other means."

I turned to the Farsh-nuke. "We have to do something."

He nodded then left the room.

Arriving back in the corridor I shut the door and asked. "What do we do?"

He turned to me and smiled. "I have a plan."

I smiled back. "Good."

"You're not gonna like it."

"So long as it stops the suffering I don't mind."

"I'm going to have to ask you to trust me."

"I can do that."

"I mean really really trust me, if this goes wrong it could be disastrous."

"You're my wife, Farsh-nuke, of course I can trust you."

"I hope you're right."

The Farsh-nuke placed his index finger to the centre of my forehead and I felt a slight buzzing at the edge of my consciousness as I passed out.

Chapter 11
The Doctor

I woke up to darkness and the sound of shouting. As my eyes adjusted to the darkness I made out a line of sliver or otherwise reflective metal before my nose and deduced from

the snatches of memory I had from before that I was in a body bag. I squirmed, trying to sit up then after some tossing and turning got a hand up to the zip and pulled it down. I unzipped the bag and climbed out, I was naked and there were was a rather obvious hand print in the blood on my breasts. I started unzipping other body bags, evidently I and Sarah had took out some of the guards, when I found Sarah and unzipped her body bag I found her face marred by a large ragged hole.

Sarah sat up. “Boo!”

I scrambled away from her. “What!?”

There was a commotion outside, heading nearer. I flattened myself against the floor when a young face with mad hair opened up the door. “Hello!” He called. “I’m the Doctor and you must be Sarah Lockehart and the Unleasher!”

I froze but Sarah scrambled out of her bag, I heard a gunshot and she collapsed.

Now I was angry so I hurled myself at the man calling himself ‘Doctor’, I heard a gunshot and blanked out. I woke up strapped to a chair dressed in an Ace cosplay costume. Sarah wore something I recognised as a Bernice Summerfield costume, the one calling himself ‘Doctor’ was before us once more.

I snarled at him. “If you are the Doctor then you should know that there’s one thing you never put in a trap!”

“This is no trap.” said the ‘Doctor’. “You are terrorists and you were hurt, we had to be sure your injuries were looked at and that you wouldn’t do anything rash until you understood the situation.”

“Then why have you dressed us up in this ridiculous garb?”

“Because, Ms Unleasher, we are not savages. We believe in equal rights for sylphs and humans alike. Your cause is our own.”

“I want revenge, not just equality.”

“Surely you know that the perpetrators of the injustice our planet faces are not human? That these Logicios and the Farsh-nuke were behind it all?”

“The Farsh-nuke would never permit something so outrageous, let alone commit it.”

“And yet you, a perfectly intelligent free thinking individual, are his pet are you not?”

“How I choose to live my life is none of your business.”

“Quite right too but neither is it any of his.”

I swallowed. “What do you want?”

“We want you two to help us overthrow the fascist regime.”

Sarah spoke up. “How do we know we won’t be replacing one fascist regime with another?”

“Doctor Who has been around for 70 years Ms Lockehart and all our members can recite every single story off the canon off by heart, most can even recite the majority of the extended universe. We know what fascism is so don’t insult us with such baseless accusations.”

“You’re not seriously trying to tell us Doctor Who tells you how to run a planet?” I said.

“Doctor Who has helped shield a great many people from the temptation of the sylphs and kept our hearts and minds clear of the depravity the human race has been subjected to in the past ten years.”

“What of Harry Potter, Star Wars and Star Trek? Surely other cults have been kept clear of temptation?”

“We had a whovian as dictator, such alternative cults were hunted down and expressing appreciation for them could get you killed. There may be underground followers but only we have the resources necessary to attempt a takeover.”

I looked at the man in his suit and bow tie. “There’s something else isn’t there? Something you’re not telling us? I think your resources extend beyond mere guns and soldiers”

He frowned. “I had hoped we would have convinced you to help us before we were forced to reveal that.”

“Let her go.” I said. “Release Sarah and I’ll help you.”

He nodded to one of the people dressed as a UNIT guard behind him, the guard ran up and freed Sarah, I could see now that Sarah's face was covered in bandages.

The 'Doctor' strode up to me and asked. "Can I trust you Unleasher? Can I trust you not to overpower me, castrate me and kill the guards?"

I smiled at him. "Probably not but I am a sylph so I'm surprisingly obedient if given the right treatment."

He leaned over me and I could smell his aftershave. "Any chance you'll tell me what that treatment is?"

I could feel my cheeks glowing red. "Spoilers."

He straightened his back, he was holding my hand and laughing, I followed him out of the room. We walked down corridors and corridors but I could not take my gaze from him, I found myself pondering idly. "You know my owner the Farsh-nuke kept getting mistaken for the Doctor? I think I'm beginning to see why."

The 'Doctor' laughed and we entered a briefing room, there I watched as a woman dressed as Nyssa of Traken took a sylph pill and became a pet, then she was fed another pill and hurriedly redressed herself before leaving the stage.

The 'Doctor' encouraged me to take the stage and the pill but I refused, I was created a sylph and being cured would kill me. Sarah took the stage, took the pill then said idly. "I wonder if we can't put this into some kind of viral form?"

She strode down to meet me. "The cure works, if we can only deliver it to everyone then we could overthrow the regime in overnight."

The 'Doctor' smiled "I'm glad you approve, that's been in development for twenty years but we've only just perfected the formula."

"Twenty years?" I said. "Surely you can't have been working on it for more than the duration of the conspiracy?"

"The Farsh-nuke's friend distributed the pill and suggested a cure be found when that girl turned up dead and the Farsh-nuke was arrested." He said.

“Oh.” I said. “Well what’s the plan?”

“We’re going to start the factories making this instead of the sylph pill and have these sent out instead of the usual sylph pill deliveries.”

“And I’m guessing you want me to do that bit?”

“If you can castrate the president, you can certainly do a little bit of industrial revolution.”

“I won’t be joining you though.” said Sarah. “I need to work on this virus.”

“Right!” I said. “Lets get going.”

I was led though into a kind of army barracks rows upon rows of bunk beds littered the place and every man, woman and sylph was going to be involved in the operation. It took a few hours for things to get going but eventually I was riding in a vintage military vehicle with the ‘Doctor’. I found myself enjoying his company immensely and so it was almost a shame when I was called upon to play my part in the operation.

I left the vehicle and strode up to the ticket barrier, I leaned forward and showed my neck seductively. “I’m afraid I’m lost, can you help me?”

“Of course!” said the man and he opened the doors then proceeded to undress me while I raised the main gate and passed the keys to the ‘Doctor’. Once the cars were through I told him I had to go to the bathroom then slipped out. The ‘Doctor’ was there to pick me up and give me a spare set of clothes as we set off to the factory. By the time I arrived in the factory the lorries were already being loaded with cure.

I started reprogramming the machinery and he went about helping with the loading of lorries. The loading and reprogramming took no more than an hour and the factory started producing the cure. We also changed the schedules and records to state that the cure was what they’d always made. Finally we left them a whole aisle of booze drugged with sylph pills.

In order to leave I had to go back to the security man as I left him and that meant I got the pleasure of being undressed by the ‘Doctor’, I re-entered the booth and he virtually melted before my eyes, so pleased was he to see me again. I replaced the keys, let the cars out then finished the man off out of a sense of common courtesy before getting dressed and leaving.

I got back in the car and was complemented by everyone in the cab for taking one for the team. I felt myself become rather flushed, I wasn't used to being lavished with praise, at least not for my skill, ingenuity and bravery. The 'Doctor' didn't say much but what he did say made me feel very happy indeed.

This routine of seducing the security man, handing over the keys, reprogramming the mainframe then covering the deception up continued throughout the night, to the point where we all got better and quicker at it. By morning all of America was pumping out the cure. We didn't stop there though, we went back to London, changed things there, changed things in China, India and eventually the whole world. The whole process took about a month.

When we finished and were heading for a reunion with Sarah, I asked the 'Doctor' "Do you think it's possible for a sylph to belong to two owners?"

"I think a sylph belongs only to herself but that they may choose to give another more say in their life than perhaps might usually be expected." said the 'Doctor'.

I smiled, took his hand then said. "In that case I think it'd be my pleasure to give you more say in my life than perhaps might usually be expected."

"I have a husband." said the 'Doctor'.

"Hello, Master." I said, waving to the chap dressed up in black.

He shrugged. "Your choice, love, I don't care what you want to do so long as you don't touch that which is my property."

I looked to the 'Doctor'. "I thought you said everybody belonged to themselves?"

"That's different." said the 'Doctor'.

"How?" I asked pointedly.

He ruffled by hair then glanced nervously at the chap in black.

When we met Sarah she squealed with excitement and shrieked. "Unleasher, Doctor, you have to see this!"

We followed her to the lab and she held up a Petri dish. “In this container is a reprogrammed strain of the common cold, it should cure all sylphs. We’ve tested it in the lab, it works and we’ve been propagating it for a while.”

She opened a huge freezer and there were stacks and stacks of Petri dishes.

We were all ecstatic about this but then the ‘Doctor’ asked. “So why the wait? What made you think you needed to wait for us to get back?”

“This.” said Sarah, she strode towards me and started tickling me under my chin. Before I knew it I was naked in her arms, purring like a cat.

The two men looked furious.

“The Unleasher is a living thinking human being.” said the ‘Doctor’. “She does not deserve to be taken advantage of.”

“She’s a pet.” said Sarah firmly. “She belongs to her own self. The Farsh-nuke and the Unleasher are one and the same and the man who told you to start work on a cure is the man who created her out of thin air, created her to be the perfect willing pet. If you cure her, you’ll kill her. Besides which I’m not exactly fond of committing genocide for the greater good.”

Sarah picked up a pill from a bowl. “This will make her immune to the cure.”

She held the pill in the palm of her hand. “Eat up, there’s a good girl.”

I opened my mouth and swallowed the pill.

“So, shall we start distributing the cure virus?” I asked.

“Unleasher.” said the ‘Doctor’ though gritted teeth. “Why don’t you go help the Master load the car?”

I nodded, was placed on the floor, picked up my clothes, scampered out of the room and listened through the door as the ‘Doctor’ started yelling at Sarah.

The ‘Master’ ushered me away before I could find out anything more specific.

We toured the world once more, dropping off petri dishes and activating them where

they would do most good. This took another month and by now the tide was turning anyway. We weren't finished though, we had operatives all around the world and the numbers were rising. It was time for a take over. On November the 23rd 2033 at midday agents all around the world broke into congress and broadcast a message to the nation, their respective nations. We were to deliver the message, I, Sarah and the 'Doctor'.

Instead of breaking in, this time round we booked ourselves a tour. I hacked into the system and we were live.

"Hello America!" I said. "I believe you know us but we are broadcasting to the world so forgive the reminder. I am the Unleasher, she is Sarah Lockehart and this is an uprising!"

The 'Doctor' coughed so I fell silent. "I am the Doctor and I have been leading the whovians for the past twenty years! I have kept the whovians free from the temptations and sins of tyranny! I have ensured that the common man can still think for itself! That he is free from the blood lust still drives the majority of the world! I have made the producers of sylph pills ship out cures for a month and I have unleashed a cleansing virus upon the world! A virus which will free a sylph from the brainwashing a sylph pill provides her with! Tyranny has been deposed, the slaves have been freed and mankind is ready to think and fight for humanity once more! I can't guarantee it'll be easy! I can't guarantee we won't make the same mistakes again! I can't guarantee you won't have to fight for your freedom! I can guarantee you a chance though! A chance to make things right and choose who you would want to govern your country! Tonight my people, the whovians will be welcoming submissions from anyone who wishes to be accorded some position in national government! Next week on the 30th November, YOU will get your chance to vote for who you want governing you! Sylphs have equal rights!"

I was so enamoured by his delivery of the speech that I almost didn't notice the wheezing, groaning noise building in the background.

"You have your chance humanity!" said the 'Doctor'. "Don't screw it up!"

He removed a sonic screwdriver from his pocket, pointed it at the screen and activated it, the emergency broadcast system stopped broadcasting, he entered the Police Public Call Box that had suddenly appeared in the room and I and Sarah Lockehart followed suit.

We entered to find the place bigger on the inside and on top of the time rotor was a straw hat.

Chapter 12
Down The Rabbit Hole

I looked at the inside of my eyelids and knew something was odd. It was intangible at first and I dare not open my eyes then I worked it was. There was no morning glory, no reassuring weight in the nether regions. I tentatively edged a hand towards the intended region, noting on the way that my thighs were a lot slimmer than usual. When my hand hit my crotch, I screamed, there was nothing there. In fact worse than nothing, there was the hollow I felt and the horrific realization that I was getting turned on as I frantically, desperately, searched for my bullocks. My mind kept dreaming up absurd explanations. 'Perhaps I was kicked really hard and it inverted?' 'Maybe I'm a hermaphrodite and didn't know it?' Most chilling of all though was. 'Perhaps I was always like this and just didn't know it?'

I opened my eyes and saw thousands upon thousands of lithe naked women. What would once have been my direst fantasy was now a living nightmare because I did not have the necessary equipment to enjoy the scene before me and because I knew now that this was a sylph farm. I looked down at my breasts and realized that they were those of a nineteen year old, I felt sick. I was 40 and in the body of a girl in a place where I could get killed at any moment. A tiny part of me noted that if I ever got aroused here I'd probably end up with quite severe psychological problems for years to come.

I tried to think rationally: The Farsh-nuke had shown me this place, asked me to trust him and knocked me out using some weird alien powers, ergo I was transformed and placed here by the Farsh-nuke but why?

I heard a loud 'SPLOOSH!!!' and turned to see a torrent of water being unleashed on some poor unsuspecting sylph. I was halfway across the - courtyard, I suppose?- before I was consciously aware that the sploosh proved why the Farsh-nuke wanted me here, it was evidence of someone or something manipulating logic and thus I had been sent to orchestrate a breakout using the Quantum Oscillator that had probably set off the logicular defences.

I arrived to find several drenched sylphs. "Who was drenched?"

I was surprised by how different my voice sounded within my own head. The words I was using didn't seem to quite fit my mouth "Who waved the stick?" A few of the sylphs pointed to another.

I soon found the Quantum Oscillator, snatched it from the girl and said. “This is how you do it!”

I aimed the Oscillator at a point above the walkway, flicked the switch and a portal appeared. I pointed below me and another portal appeared, I fell through onto the walkway, walked towards the door, flung it open and tried to walk through it.

I felt as if I’d slammed into a glass pane, the Farsh-nuke was before me and clearly quite annoyed.

“No! I need you to trust me! People will die, if you don’t!” He said.

“Oh shut up! You’ve turned me into a girl! Have you any idea how sick I feel now!?” I barked back.

“You think your mental well being matters even the slightest when billions are suffering?”

“You’re my fucking wife!”

“I am the Doctor! I am the Farsh-nuke! It is my job to look after the majority and the weak, making sacrifices if need be! You should never have married me if you weren’t prepared for this to happen someday!”

“I should have known when I got engaged to you that one day you would turn me into a nineteen year old girl and ask me to orchestrate a mass exodus?”

“Yes!”

“You’re a mental projection to stop me leaving before my work is done, aren’t you?”

“Yes!”

“Well since you’re here, any tips?”

He nodded and handed me a Petri dish. “This is a curative virus. It will free everyone of the curse of sylph hood and plant the idea in their minds that they should escape.”

“And why, pray tell, couldn’t you do this yourself?”

“Just help them escape, please.”

“You’re up to something aren’t you?”

“I’m sure I don’t know what you mean.”

“You’ve done all this just to keep me busy, haven’t you? You weren’t originally going to bother, were you?”

“You made me better, you make me better.”

“Oh, you cunt! I bet you’re off sacrificing yourself right now aren’t you? You selfish twat!”

The vision of the Farsh-nuke vanished and I found I could step through the doorway.

“Heh!” I said to myself. “What do you know? Love really does conquer all”

I then promptly turned back, materialised several Petri dishes, hurled them around the room then created a larger portal along the corridor, connecting to one along the courtyard.

I ran down the corridor, with my Quantum Oscillator set to track anything with a tri-binaric cardiovascular system. A little blip back down the way I’d come told me my suspicion’s about the gorilla’s pet were correct while a more prominent one up ahead told me where the Farsh-nuke I was looking for was.

I ran down corridor after corridor, upstairs then downstairs down yet more corridors until at last I came to an airlock but worryingly the readings indicated he was still beyond it so I found a nearby spacesuit, climbed in, zipped up then left through the airlock. I followed his readings through the nothingness for at least a couple of hundred miles when his readings indicated that he went upwards. I sighed then activated the jet back on his suit. An hour later I could see a spaceship within sight, I followed his readings in through the airlock, saw a spare suit lying haphazardly around and so took mine off and the smell confirmed the Farsh-nuke had worn it.

I ran after his readings through this new spaceship, navigating maze after maze of corridors until I came to a room with only one door but an air vent so I used my Quantum Oscillator to unscrew the vent cover then followed his readings down the vent but even this cramped crawl became a maze with 6 way intersections at regular intersections. This was getting really boring, the Farsh-nuke’s readings seemed to reflect

that also as suddenly I was pursuing them through artificial forests and mountains. After 5 hours following his signal I entered a library and found a curiously block like chest beside a wooden sign. It read simply: Friend, you have followed me far and endured much. Consider the items in this chest some compensation.

I opened the chest and found my clothes had been dry cleaned, there were some guns, a few bombs and a bottle with the label:

Cure

Alice grew big and small, Neo forgot or fought, Sylphs are born and killed, the Doctor lived and died even Sherlock faced this decision.

Which pill is right? Choose wisely.

Inside were two pills, each looked identical to the other.

“Right!” I said to myself. “What are the options? I’m returned to the way I am or I become a sylph? Except the Farsh-nuke isn’t about the good or bad, he’s not some lonely god, some empirical force for justice. He is not man or woman, good or bad, human or alien, enslaved or free, his always both. He walks the middle ground, he has no identity and thus he has all identities. He is Alice, Neo, Sylph, Sherlock and the Doctor and yet he is none of them at the same time.”

I picked up the bottle, opened my mouth and swallowed both pills. I felt dizzy and looked at my hands. They were growing. I collapsed, my limbs were all growing and I felt the entirely bizarre but blessed sensation of my cock growing again then things started to get weird. I suddenly had a vision in my head of a director, a comic book artist, novelist and a tv producer each picturing me then it got weirder as I saw Trappist monks weaving tapestries of my life, cavemen smearing symbols onto walls, mimers miming, jazz players singing and kids peeing symbols into snow, all of my life. I saw version after version of my life and it got too weird to describe.

At some point I think I passed out as I opened my eyes and felt relatively refreshed, the memories safely distanced by a night’s sleep. There was a full length mirror and I was relieved to see I was myself again. I climbed into my suit, which now fitted me then set off after the Farsh-nuke again.

I followed his readings through the library, up a chimney, through a tornado, out a giant nostril, through a sewer, along various narrow precipices, past BBC television centre, then out another airlock into a logicular recreation of Minecraft Solar Survival. I punched a tree, got some wood, started a tree farm then started to make my way across space to Pluto. I didn’t bother with axes, I just punched trees, crafted the wood into planks and

slowly built a bridge across. It took a month of minecraft days but eventually I got to Pluto, where the Farsh-nuke's readings seemed to vanish off the edge of the map. I shrugged and took a leap.

Everything went black as I watched myself die in third person.

A message appeared before my eyes.

Game Over

This ominous declaration was followed by two button options.

'Respawn' and 'Title Menu'

I selected Title Menu out of idle curiosity, then main game, there I found my own Minecraft game files. I selected the 'Whoniverse' map out of nostalgia and found myself in a land of blocks, looking at a massive dalek, I turned round and looked at the 'tardis' I'd made, essentially a nether portal inside a lapiz wool shed. I stepped inside and found an avatar dressed like the seventh Doctor.

"How the buggering hell did you catch up with me so fast?" asked the Farsh-nuke.

"In this section of the nothingness, Minecraft is reality." I said "I was therefore able to fast track to your position using a Nether portal."

"In other words 'Pow! Mother fuckers!'?" suggested the Farsh-nuke.

I beamed. "Yeah! Now what the fuck has this all been about!?"

The Farsh-nuke sighed. "You, mainly. I placed a few bombs and a few viruses but you activated all of it. I should think the Logicio Empire is pretty much crippled by now and I had to test you, I had to be sure you could cope with my life."

"Me? It's all been about testing ME!?"

"Yes, it's been a while and I'm not quite sure where you are yet so I had to know."

"And you decided to do that by leading me on a chase through the nothingness?"

"Well, yes."

“Oh.”

“Anyway we best go back to our respective life files now.”

“Right, how do we do that?”

“Die.”

“Die?”

“Yes, die.”

“To reiterate: You, the Farsh-nuke, guardian of the nothingness and interuniversal hero, are advocating death?”

“Yes.”

“Right.”

“I’ve worked it out, it’s the only way.”

“Why?”

“Well in this portion of the nothingness we experience life as minecraft characters that means our eyes are filled solely with the window. We can physically do what a minecraft person can do and by looking in a certain way we can select buttons on the menu screens but we have no access to the keyboard shortcuts.”

“Oh.”

“Which means we have to die to bring up the option for title menu.”

“Funny how Notch never thought this little issue through when he was coding the game?”

“You think Notch deliberately didn’t include a button back to the title screen on the mainscreen so that any wanderers into this particular part of the nothingness would have to die in order to get there?”

“Well, he is a nazi.”

The Farsh-nuke ran up and put a hand over my mouth as he hissed. “This is the nothingness, be careful what you say here, gods are real”

I broke free from the grip. “Cool! Does that mean I can bitch slap Jesus?”

The Farsh-nuke winced and I turned round to see an avatar of the son of god.

“Jesus Christ!” I exclaimed.

The son of god stared unflinchingly at me. “Yeah! I seriously suggest you stop taking my name in vain.”

I ran through the nether portal, ran out of my ‘tardis’ construction, activated the block of TNT I’d placed down for just such an emergency, backed off to a safe distance and watched as the nether portal exploded.

“Yeah! I’m kind of the son of god bitch so that ain’t gonna work.” said Jesus.

I ran into and up my tower, got to the very top and heard a hissing sound, I turned to see the giant green walking penis and said. “Why, Mr Astley, what an unexpected pleasure?”

I punched the creeper and it exploded, just before Jesus got to me.

I went back to the title menu, selected the newly created world ‘The life of that prick who took my name in vain.’ and was back at my death screen in Solar Survival. I respawned back in the library, ran through it, up a chimney, through a tornado, out a giant nostril, through a sewer, along various narrow precipices, past BBC television centre then out another airlock into the logicular recreation of Minecraft Solar Survival.

I got to Pluto and rechecked the readings, he was definitely off the map, I wondered how it could be possible but then I remembered how he could slip in and out of the nothingness and universes. I concentrated really hard, remembering what had happened each time it vanished and particularly how it had felt to traverse the nothingness with him. I think a week of Minecraft days passed before finally I blinked out of existence there and blinked into existence somewhere else.

I was in a house, looking at a computer screen showing Minecraft Solar Survival. The

computer was in a double bedroom, clothes strewn over the floor and desk. I strode past saw a bathroom and suddenly aware of how long it had been since I'd voided my bowls. I had a piss, flushed the toilet, made my way down the indigo shag pile carpeted stairs, took a glance in the living room. It was r shaped, with a tacked on dining room that was clearly used largely for storing junk. There were two grey armchairs and a three seater grey sofa, all of which had seen better times, behind the armchairs was an outcast cream sofa bed. Opposite the main sofa was a 3 foot fish tank filled with guppies, to the left of the fish tank, from where I stood was a 42 inch Sony Bravia tv, angled diagonally into the room. I recognised this place but couldn't say where.

I stepped out of the wooden front door into the bright grey sunlight, there was the pond on the left side of the front garden and the right side was overgrown with shrubs and trees. I knew where I was now. I was home. It was from this house that I'd walked to school, from this house that I'd first learned the first of the Farsh-nuke's many secrets.

I walked through the yellow gate at the side of the house, past the usual dead and dying plants and out into my Dad's pride and joy, a vast moss covered lawn. I took a seat on the newly added swing seat and looked at the threadbare tree I'd loved so much as a child. I had climbed it so much and so often, forever returning into the house with scratches and bruises but I didn't care, I just climbed as close to the top as I dare, even rigging up a make shift safety line in case I should fall. Those had been the days, simpler times. Times when the Farsh-nuke was just my mate William and life consisted of climbing trees running through woods, watching tv, doing simple sums and eating chicken and chips. Days when Doctor Who didn't have the slightest factor in our lives and girls were strange aliens who would occasionally hold your hand and smile at you.

My dad came out in shorts, a hockey tshirt and a cricket umpire's hat. He was balancing a plate of marmalade covered toast with one hand holding a paint tin sized mug of proper frothy coffee in his other hand. He had his Ipod in but when he saw me, he placed his toast and mug down on a lichen covered plastic table then said "All right, son, it's been a while since we last saw you."

I kept looking at the garden, it was considered improper to make eye contact in our house. "Yeah, I'm good, been a bit busy but I'm good."

"Good."

"Yeah"

"Do you want to get a cup of tea or something?"

“No, I best be leaving actually, I only stopped by as I was passing. Maybe next time though?”

“Well you’re always welcome here and your mother would love to see you”

“I know” I said then I got up, gave him a thumbs-up then strode back out through the yellow gate.

I left the driveway and stood on the grass verge, waiting for a chance to cross. When I made my way across I walked to then cut through a nnearby road I knew well. I didn’t need the Quantum Oscillator now, I knew where the Farsh-nuke would be. I strode through a park and could almost see me and the Farsh-nuke as children riding past here on mountain bikes. The park seemed so much smaller now and yet so much more important. As a child, it was just the only place to go, as a 40 year old veteran of the twisted and deranged it had a certain mundane beauty about it. There were no monsters here, no temporal anomalies or illogical realities. It was just the simple beauty of a park fringed by woods and estates.

I soon arrived at the children’s play park and could once more almost see ghosts of my past risking life and limb on zip lines or up rope pyramids. The park cornered onto the lake and I walked along it with the lake to my right. Gleefully drowning in nostalgia as I walked. I remember the time I fitted paddle bags to my bike and every time I picked up speed the fabric would get caught in the spokes and I’d slide into a skid. I got so paranoid that my friends were ramming me off the road or something but the Farsh-nuke worked out the problem and had me try it without the paddle bags.

I reached the turn off for Waitrose and was relieved to see that Forbouys was still there, although it was now renamed Costco. I entered and picked up a Beano, a copy of Webuser, Doctor Who Magazine and 5 pounds of sherbet, mints, chocolate and sweets. I strode out past the now massive Waitrose, across the car park and to the petrol station. It was safe to cross so I did and made my way down the little path to the nearby canal.

I was relieved to see that they’d replaced the foot bridge over the main road with one whose steps tended more toward the horizontal. I climbed the bridge and paused midway, looking out over the great arterial road, the road that kept my town alive. It was breath taking it always was. After enjoying the view, I climbed down the other side walked up the little ramp and was walking along the canal, the sun was shining now, the ducks, moorhens and other birds can’t identify were playing in the water.

I walked for a time without paying much heed to my surroundings, too enthralled by memories of my past was I. As I walked and reminisced, passing cyclists, dog walkers, joggers and school children, I dined on my sweets and was halfway through a sugar rush when I saw it, the Bridge Barn. The sight brought as much joy as it did trepidation. The memories of the place that it brought to mind were wonderful and I was parched but it was also now the lair of the Farsh-nuke.

I strode up the ramp, crossed the bridge and strode into the gastropub. I saw him at our table and he called out. “Waiter! One pint of icy Diet Coke if you please and hold the lemon!”

A waiter nodded then went to get the drinks.

I took a seat and he said. “You know where we are?”

“Yes, our hometown.” I said as I browsed the menu.

He took a sip from his drink then said. “Now how about when?”

I took out the Webuser and flung it across to him. “April the first 2034 or thereabouts”

“That’s cheating.”

“Well at least I wasn’t so cliché as to pick up a flicking newspaper.”

“True but then most newspapers have gone the way of all flesh, only the Sun remains and that’s only because breasts will always sell.”

“Surely some still exist online?”

“True, most newspapers now exist as subscription based websites for Iphone and the Guardian have taken the Cracked route.”

“Which is?”

“How am I supposed to know? I only work for them.”

The waiter arrived with my Diet Coke and asked if we wanted to order food, I ordered a half roast chicken covered in pork bacon with pork ribs, he ordered a chicken salad.

“Anyway what did you actually do whilst I was living the weirdest acid trip in history?” I asked once the waiter was gone.

The Farsh-nuke beamed, took a sip then explained. “Once I boarded the second ship of a curiously pale faced and pixelated man. I followed him to the place you know as Minecraft Solar Survival but this time it was Terrorvale.”

“Terrorvale?”

“Yes.”

“As in from the Yogscasts series Shadow of Israphel?”

“Yes.”

“Then he was Israphel?”

“His chosen skin certainly was.”

“Okay, go on.”

“Well I pursued him through Terrorvale and killed him, then he vanished and the world around me changed to Minecraft Solar Survival, I jumped off Pluto and caught up with him in the Whoniverse, I was just about to kill him when you showed up and he left the Nothingness.”

“Sorry.”

“Honestly, don’t worry about it. I’ve got a plan.”

“What kind of plan?”

“The kind of plan that means we can have dessert.”

I beamed and he beamed then we started talking about the old days, about how beautiful our hometown was and how everything was amazingly basically back to normal, even if we were now starting to colonize other planets and our technology was hyper advanced. Our food arrived and and we ate in silence then ordered a tiramisu and a profiterole sundae respectively. The Farsh-nuke kindly paid for the food then we crossed the bridge and walked along the canal, past the Lightbox, across the dual

carriageway and into the Town Centre.

We strode past the line of bicycles and the Library, turned right at the War Memorial with a statue that still looks eerily like a Weeping Angel and walked into the Shopping Centre, we climbed the stairs and came up past Auberge and the cinema. We could each see Israphel, now looking more humanoid yet odder because of it. He was perched on the ledge that the famous stuffed mascot stood on. The Farsh-nuke took the left and I took the right.

As we ran I could hear the Farsh-nuke call out. “Israphel, your time is up! You’re in my world now! Bound by my rules! You may be a Logicio but you can’t logic your way out of this! You’re in my hometown! You’re at the birthplace of Alien Invasion Stories and the fifth Doctor went to school here! You have lost! Give up, Israphel!”

Israphel boomed. “You recruited me, Farsh-nuke! You sent me here! You gave me the powers of a Logicio and now I will burn you! I will eat your children and rape your wives! I will blind your boys and castrate your men! I will rule this world as my own and I will skin your eyes then use them as Christmas decorations!”

“I would never recruit you! You’re mistaken, Israphel! You’re waging war on the wrong Farsh-nuke! You’re fallible! You make mistakes and you will fall!”

Israphel raised his arms and started chanting, a sand storm started up from nowhere.

I slammed the fire alarm and created some netherack then set it aflame. I cried. “You may be Israphel and he may be the Farsh-nuke but I am the man with no name and a very good working knowledge of logicular magic! You stand no chance against me you two-bit Minecraft villain! Even Simon and Lewis of the Yogscasts can whip your arse, so do us all a favour and get off my world!”

“Hey!” cried the Farsh-nuke. “I like the Yogscasts!”

“Oh! Shut up, Farsh-nuke, and concentrate your mind on trying to stop him!”

Israphel increased his chanting and suddenly the sand was flying in cubes a foot long in every direction.

“Fuck!” said the Farsh-nuke. “I hadn’t exactly counted on this!”

Israphel lowered his hands and boomed. “I am the darkness and the night! The storm at

the heart of the sun and the endless desolation of space! I am become death and demon! The devil may lick the scum off my feet and Notch can suck on my massive hairy cock! I AM ISRAPHEL!!!"

The Farsh-nuke muttered. "Game on, bitch!" Then he proclaimed. "I'm the man who doesn't exist, the alien gas from beyond the universe and the hero from the end of time! I am the man who became his own pet, mother, secret lover and murderer! I am the reason the wind is insane, why horses refuse to talk about time travel and how Zaphod Beeblebrox managed to upset the order of his Geneology! I am the Doctor. President elect of the high council of the Time Lords, Keeper of the Legacy of Rassilon, Defender of the Laws of Time, Protector of Gallifrey! I AM THE FARSH-NUKE!!!"

"And you, little man!?" asked Israphel. "Who are you to do battle with angels and demons?"

I shrugged. "I am the boy from here who published a novel that didn't sell, I am the friend that followed an alien through the gates of hell and I am the man who has seen warts scarier than you. I grew up moaning about homework and going to bed, I faced demons in my sleep and tackled awkwardness and embarrassment in school. I worked in an office, in IT Support, I was happy but I have done my share of fighting and I have always survived and I will not be beaten by you because I am not an angel or a demon. I'm just a middle aged man trying to live his life, I have nothing to lose and no reason to die. In the war between good and evil, only he who accepts the middle ground will win."

"And you think that you're the middle ground?"

"I've stood by and watched children cry, watched people die. I'm not a good man but I'm not a bad man. Join me, Israphel, walk the line and live."

"No, Israphel! Die! Give up! End your life! Throw yourself off that ledge and give the cleaners a job to do! You don't want to end your life living on the straight and narrow! You want to go out with a bang don't you!? Well how about a splat!? Would that satisfy you!? A quite literal fall from grace and power!?" cried the Farsh-nuke

I was horrified. "No, Farsh-nuke! He doesn't need to die! He can be reformed!"

"He was designed as the personification of evil!" said the Farsh-nuke. "Death's too good for him!"

"Says the Farsh-nuke!"

He fell silent and I heard a wheezing groaning sound then watched in amazement as a Public Police Call Box materialised around Israphel and the mascot..

Chapter 13
Israphel's Undignified End

The 'Doctor' handed me a scalpel and some chloroform then hung on to the console. Sarah decided to follow the 'Doctor's actions but I had a feeling I was needed where I was and sure enough a pale skinned man with black robes, red eyes and the teeth of a shark materialised.

"I am the mighty Israphel! Abase yourself at my feet you snivelling insects!" said the pale man.

"I am the Unleasher and all men are scum!" I said then I leapt on him, pouring, chloroform down his nostrils and worked like a skilled surgeon to separate him from his testicles. The 'Doctor' clicked his fingers and the doors opened so I dragged him by his cock and threw him outside.

Chapter 14
Explanations

I was astonished when the tardis materialised but even more astonished when Israphel was ejected bodily from it, clearly bleeding from his nether regions.

"I did not expect that!" I said.

"I did!" said the Farsh-nuke. "As defeats of evil demigods go, I'd say that went rather smoothly don't you?"

"You planned all this!?"

"I planned so much more than just this!"

"Will he live!?"

"Not after his sandstorm's finished caking the entire place in sand!"

I was just fathoming how this place could get any weirder when a man who looked

uncannily like a certain Doctor Who actor leaned out the window, dressed as his Doctor and fired an arrow from a crossbow. The arrow lodged in the wall above us and the Farsh-nuke, he got a grip then started climbing across. I however placed a portal above the tardis then one below me, fell onto it, swung myself inside and was helped up by the Unleasher and Sarah Lockehart.

“Farsh-nuke! You have got some explaining to do!” I boomed.

The Farsh-nuke was just getting helped into the tardis by the actor but he soon got up, took his hat off the time rotor then gestured expectantly to the Unleasher, who removed his trademark umbrella from her mouth and gave it to him.

He turned to me and said. “Now my friend, what are your deductions?”

I was somewhat stumped. “W-well he’s Matt Smith, the eleventh Doctor, you’re the Farsh-nuke, the seventh Doctor, she’s Sarah Lockehart, someone we’ve yet to actually meet but she was no doubt captured by a Farsh-nuke from a different universe and that is the Unleasher.”

The Farsh-nuke appeared to mull it over before he asked. “Anything else?”

“This is the tardis and it was the SEGHAT. I’m not sure how that’s possible but there you go.”

“Close, very close. I actually rescued Sarah when I was busy wiping out the daleks with the help of the Septagonoids, I then placed her in the past for you and me to find in our future. The Unleasher is the first duplicate you created, I saw fit that she would team up with Sarah and the Doc here to fix the world and develop her own person. The fact that she became a man hating serial castrater and murderer was actually something I used to my advantage.”

“That’s how you offed Israphel?”

“Indeed but I think the thing I’m most proud of is my work with the good Doctor here”

“Somehow I have a feeling I’m not going to like this”

“Would you like to explain, Derek?”

The actor sighed. “I don’t suppose I have a choice. I first met the Farsh-nuke at a

convention. He said he expected great things of me and to be honest I was a bit ‘Meh!’ about it, he was just one of thousands of cosplayers. Then he materialised his tardis around me as I was walking home one day and before I knew it I was exchanging speeches with daleks. We travelled together for three years, him always claiming to have trouble getting us back home. Eventually he told me about this wonder drug called the sylph pill and how it could stop you ageing but that it came at a price. He said he could mill a special version of the drug but that in return I had to follow his twenty year long plan exactly to the letter.”

He turned the Unleasher duplicate, held up her hands and said. “Part of his plan was that I play gay.”

“Oh!” said the Unleasher’s duplicate. “Well if my master sanctions it...”

Derek grinned then looked to the Farsh-nuke, who answered. “Third corridor on your left, fifth door on the right.”

Derek and the Unleasher’s duplicate ran through the interior door of the ship.

I looked the Farsh-nuke, who shrugged.

“And what about the ship?” I said.

“Oh, it’s still the SEGHAT, I just modded it with a tardis mode. Useful for staying within the same universe, usually.” said the Farsh-nuke.

“Can you take me home?”

“Yes.”

“Will you?

“If you want?”

“I want to.”

“It’s just that I am not the Unleasher any more, I’m better. There are worlds out there where the sky is burning, the sea's asleep, and the rivers dream; people made of smoke and cities made of song. Somewhere there's danger, somewhere there's injustice, and somewhere else the tea's getting cold. Come on. We've got work to do.”

“Do not quote Survival at me, Farsh-nuke.”

“Well think about me when you are living your life one day after another, all in a neat pattern. Think about the homeless traveller in his old police box, his days like crazy paving.”

“Oh shut up, Farsh-nuke! You are not the Doctor and I am not Ace or Mel! Don’t you have anything original to say to me!?”

“I shall miss you.”

“Withnail! The quote is: I shall miss you, Withnail!”

“Who said I was quoting?”

“Christ! You are unbearable! You torture to prove a point, you lead me on wild goose chases through a world of insanity and treat your friends as pawns so take me home and do not bother coming back!”

The ship landed and I strode out, he had at least got it right in the end. I turned back and he said. “You made me, you made me better than I ever was and I will be nothing without you.”

“Too little, too fucking late!” I said as the blue ship faded from reality.

Chapter 15
Life Ever After

I unlocked the door and stepped inside, the place had been ransacked. I went upstairs to the bedroom, laid the two magazines and comic out on the bed then proceeded to read through them, starting with the Beano and ending with Doctor Who Magazine. By the time I had finished all three, I decided to get some kip.

I woke up at god knows what time and proceeded to clean up my place. It took a whole day but I was glad to have it done. I then walked to my local newsagents and brought some basic supplies. Enough food to last the week. I walked into work the next day and practically begged to have my job back. I was given a junior position but someone recognized me from the news reports last June and before I knew it I was getting paid to spill the beans on mine and and the Farsh-nuke’s relationships, My novel was picked

up by a publisher and I was approached to write biographies and auto biographies. Some even recommended I start writing a scifi series of books based on mine and the Farsh-nuke's adventures and that got picked up by ITV. I was hot property and brought a country house near Derek, who had married the Unleasher's duplicate.

As I got older I found myself stunned by how good I looked for my age and people would often comment upon it, even Derek. After a while this constant flattery started to get to me and that's when I remembered the pills I had taken during that absurd chase. I started to wonder if the pills had been dosed with something, something that might perhaps explain my lack of ageing, indeed it occurred to me that the ease with which I had crossed from nothingness back into my own universe might be explained by those self same pills as surely if it were so easy under normal circumstances then the nothingness would be full of spaced out druggies who had accidentally entered the correct mental state to cross the void.

I decided to test whether I still had this skill and so twenty years after I had left the Farsh-nuke behind I focused my mind and appeared in the nothingness, it really was quite breath taking, an endless sea of green with cities and shapes within. I fancied I could see green school children laughing and playing far off in the distance, then I heard the strains of John Williams and saw a massive green shark swimming towards me, teeth bared. I focused hard and was back in my living room but I would see that shark in my nightmares for a decade to come.

A year later, on a whim, I applied for a part on Doctor Who, unfortunately I was not good enough for the part but three years later they were auditioning for the part of the Doctor and they rang me up and asked if I would considered auditioning. So I went along to the audition and before I knew it I was being cast in the part. Oddly for this year they were going for a massive change and changing the exterior to be a British brown wooden shed and the console would have an extra seventh panel so it could travel between universes as well. Then when I showed them the Quantum Oscillator and explained how it worked, they started writing it in as the replacement for the sonic screwdriver.

I played the part like, well like a mix between the Farsh-nuke and myself really. I lasted 9 years and only then did I stop because of one night that I will get to later. It was a great time for me, for Doctor Who and the Whovians, the show was building up to its 100th anniversary year. I faced off against Daleks, Cybermen, the Master, the Rani, Omega, Rassillon, Nimon, the Weeping Angels, the Silence, Krotons, Slitheen, Ood, Autons, Axons, Vampires, Voords, Sontarans, Rutans and at least 10 or twenty original adversaries. I had 9 companions throughout my run, ranging from robot dogs and

fellow Timelords to Sylphs and flying sharks. I was never really bothered by the pay, the time commitments or possibility of being typecast because as far as I was concerned this was the only acting job I would ever get. I did not seem to age yet I obviously was not young and I constantly kept pace with the changing face of the media so they never got sick of me and I did not get sick of them.

Then one day in June 2063 he turned up, in the SEGHAT, looking as much like seven as he had ever been in this incarnation.

“Come with me?” He said.

“No.” I said.

“Why?”

“I have got too much to lose.”

“I heard. You are the new Doctor, congratulations by the way.”

“What do you want?”

“You.”

“Bullshit! You have just come back because you think you can use me in one of your little games.”

The Farsh-nuke was wide eyed with rage “How dare you suggest I could even do such a thing!?”

I smiled. “Experience.”

He was suddenly very quiet “I miss you, you are my husband and it is lonely without you.”

“Fuck off! You are the Farsh-nuke, you could bed any girl this side of the nothingness!”

“But it is not a girl I want.”

“Then go to a fucking gay bar.”

“I need you, the nothingness needs you.”

“The whovians need me to.”

“The SEGHAT is a time machine, you know? I could take you out of time, right here, right now and it would never affect any of your prior commitments.”

“I am not Amy Pond, it is not the night before my wedding and you are not my imaginary friend, fuck off!

The Farsh-nuke bristled, clearly affronted “All right I’ll go.”

He turned and started to walk to where the SEGHAT was parked.

I couldn’t help playing him at his own game by quoting Dragonfire “Yes, that is right, you are going. You have been gone for ages. You are already gone. You are still here. You have just arrived. I haven't even met you yet. It all depends on who you are and how you look at it. Strange business, time.”

The Farsh-nuke turned to look back at me and I flashed him a smile, he strode on and I went about my business, chuffed by how well I’d rebuttled him. That night however I heard a horrendous stammering ‘Sh!’ that sent a gust of wind to drive the bed clothes from my sheet.

“’Ello McScrugyton!” bellowed the Farsh-nuke

As you can probably tell from his rude behaviour it was the first Farsh-nuke, dressed all in black, he yelled that at me, 4 inches from my face, which made it rather easy to punch.

“No!” I screamed, snatched up my bed clothes before promptly turning back to sleep.

“Ahem!” said the Farsh-nuke. “AHEM!!!”

I glared daggers at him.

The Farsh-nuke smiled. “I do not think you get how this works! I am the Farsh-nuke, sent by the Logicios to convince you to travel with my future self!”

“It will not work! I’m nearly 70, I do stubborn well!” I said.

“Well I do not take no for an answer because you see the moment I don’t get results they’re going to execute me!”

“Then burn in hell, Farsh-nuke!”

“Now that is not very nice.” The Farsh-nuke grabbed me by the left shoulder and physically lifted me out of bed.

I grabbed for my Quantum Oscillator under my pillow but he snatched it and held it out of my reach. “Nuh-uh! Not until I have played my part in this charade!”

I bristled. “All right! So long as eventually you leave me to make the decision myself!”

He smiled. “Fine by me.”

“Okay, well what have you got to say then?”

“My future self, he has got this absurd idea that we should go all Christmas carol on your arse! Thus, predictably, I am the ghost of adventures past! Step with me back through time as we stalk ourselves through time like non penis looking creepers!”

As I followed him through into the SEGHAT I remarked. “This is so un-Dickensian!”

“Be fair though.” said the Farsh-nuke as he hit the console, starting the ship into flight. “You are in your pyjamas.”

“If by pyjamas you mean my ‘Keep Calm And Call The Doctor’ tshirt and question mark boxer shorts? Then yes, I suppose that is quite Dickensian.”

The ship landed, we stepped outside and the Farsh-nuke said. “April the 21st 2009, the London sewers.”

We watched as our younger selves were chased through the sewers by a quite unconvincing giant rat.

“The first time I saved your life.” I said.

We watched as the younger Farsh-nuke slipped in his haste and fell face first into the gloop. The younger me turned and ran at the rat. He leapt onto it and rammed his

fingers in its eyes. The great beast wailed and younger me kicked his teeth in while the younger Farsh-nuke got to his feet and threw a grenade into its mouth before dragging the Farsh-nuke away.

We re-entered the SEGHAT before our younger selves spotted us then exited the ship as we landed again. We walked out and hid at the corner of a subway.

“You do not need to tell me the date.” I said as we watched the younger Farsh-nuke waltz down the subway with a woman I knew from a million different news reports, witness and character statements.

It all seemed quite innocent at first, two drunken love birds flirting and making out with each other, then the younger Farsh-nuke uttered the immortal words. “Mind if I suckle on those?” Then it turned into a horror movie.

I wanted to look away, I wanted to re-enter the SEGHAT and forget the woman I love had ever done this but the Farsh-nuke made me watch and I still have nightmares to this day. They both seemed so happy about it until the one realized the other was dead then the younger Farsh-nuke seemed genuinely distraught and desperate, we watched a minute of his desperation but then we left.

As the ghost of adventures past left he shook my hand and said. “I need you. You are my conscience and my saviour. Who would I be without you? Even now?”

I did not answer, just watched him go and went back to bed. I did not sleep. Could not sleep. Was never going to sleep. Every time I closed my eyes I could see my friend eating the poor girl like a kid in a candy shop and could hear his desperate sobbing afterwards. It was horrific and made all the more so because I could have stopped him. I just know I could have. He was not thinking, all it would have taken was for me to say ‘Mate?’ and he would have stopped. I am certain of it. That is why he did not start screaming until he was finished. He was in a lust and hunger fuelled trance but wake him from it and it would stop. I was not there and someone died.

The hour before the next ghost showed up seemed to stretch on for eternity but eventually the SEGHAT materialised and the Farsh-nuke strode out. I will repeat that for you, out of the three incarnations of my best friend for the ghost of adventures present I got the seventh Doctor, not the Unleasher.

“I am the ghost of adventures present, come with me.” said the Farsh-nuke.

“If this is a trick...” I said, letting the threat hang.

We entered the SEGHAT and arrived in London to see the Septagonoids invading.

“Oh very funny!” I said. “Roped your pals in again did you?”

I kept my smile right up until the point here the Septagonoids invaded and started exterminating people.

“Oh.”

“I had this invasion on my to do list, I decided to check out what would happen if you weren’t there to help me and if turns out that this time round they have logicular technology and thus none of my plans work. I am killed in the first act of the invasion and 4 million people will die before you are called in to advise the army on how to tackle them.”

“Yeah, but we know about it now?”

“I knew about it before I checked out this timeline. It is as good as a fixed point I am afraid.”

“We cannot do anything?”

“No.”

“Why?”

We went back into the SEGHAT and in short order I saw that the Logicios were back and the daleks would invade. Billions would die. Billions would die because I wasn’t there to help the Farsh-nuke. It seems the Septagonoids created a breach in the logic of the universe allowing the fascists of the nothingness to pour in. So much death and suffering. Ships flying through the sky. People fleeing the cities. Mothers and children running for their lives.

He left me in my room, shook my hand and said. “The ghost of adventures future will be with you shortly. The nothingness needs you as its champion. We all do. Like you said, you are the friend that followed an alien through the gates of hell and faces demons in his sleep. We need you, the universe needs you, time needs you.”

The Farsh-nuke left and I tried to sleep, tried to doze but I could see so much suffering when I closed my eyes. The Farsh-nuke needed me. Even if he was not evil. Even if he was doing the right thing. Sometimes he just was not good enough. Sometimes he needed a companion. I thought of every time I had saved his life, it was almost too often to count. I had not really thought about it before, yet it was all I could think of. The greatest champion of time there had ever been and he could have died without my presence. Without my last minute save or strategy, he would be no more. The enormity of the weight on my shoulders was almost too much to bare and as I result I did not hear the SEGHAT landing but it did and a robed figure with a scythe strode out and leaned over me.

I screamed.

The robed figure laughed and pulled down his hood.

I cried. “Farsh-nuke, you terrible cunt!”

There before me, robed like death and the Doctor in A Good Man Goes To War was me, exactly me. Only he was rather smug.

“Has the Farsh-nuke ever read A Christmas Carol?” I asked myself.

“He saw the Doctor Who recreation but otherwise no. You will not believe how long it took me to convince him not to send a flying shark round.”

“You are right, I do not. You are just one of his pawns, I could no more trust you than the Doctor could trust the Master.”

“Oh, but there is such delightful fan fiction about that pairing.”

“I only looked at it to laugh at how shit it was.”

“Oh, really? Then why do I recall a little frisson downstairs and misremembered dreams with you and the Farsh-nuke playing Doctor and Master?”

I looked at him, stared hard into his eyes then said casually. “Why should I care what you think? You are just one of his pet sylphs come to turn tricks.”

“I am you. I am you thirty years into the future and I have come to save you from yourself. Come with me.”

I looked at him, looked at my future self and closed my eyes. I could see a woman dying and the Farsh-nuke horrified at what he had done. I could see death screaming from above and hear the Farsh-nuke's commentary on the course of the war. I opened my eyes and saw hope in my future selves eyes. He was not here to lecture me, berate me, torture me. He would not whip me into submission. He would present me with the options, present me with hope.

"Lead on, ghost of adventures future."

Future me smiled and led the way into the SEGHAT. There I saw the Unleasher and could feel her mentally undressing me as I did the same.

"Oi!" called my future self. "I will not have inter temporal fraternisations on my ship. The Unleasher here is just the driver and a perk of travelling with the Farsh-nuke."

I could not help but gaze at the Unleasher's chest and muttered. "Perk indeed."

My future self snarled at me as the craft landed again. As he swept out he said. "Just a little reminder of what you are missing."

I stepped out into the night club and watched as I and the Unleasher shared our first drunken fumble. It was strangely beautiful and ugly all at the same time.

As our past self went down on the younger Unleasher, both I and my future self muttered. "Minty fresh."

We looked at each other then smiled. We re-entered the SEGHAT and soon materialised outside our old school as my younger self was getting a beating. We watched the Farsh-nuke stop, reconsider his actions then go to save me.

"He always saves you, you know? Even imprisoning you was a salvation. He locked you away in Schroedinger's box so he could come back and help you through those years. So she could. While you were in that box you were safe, no one could touch you and you need never fear of eating sylph flesh. He looks out for you." said my future self.

I shrugged. "Perhaps he does but I have a life now. I can not leave that to go on a jolly around the nine galaxies."

He sighed and we re-entered the SEGHAT.

He looked at me and said. “What if I could give you an alternative? What if I could take you to a world exactly like your own but where the Farsh-nuke did not need you?”

I was amazed. “You can do that?”

“I am the finest Master of Logic this side of the Gamma Belt, that is the Unleasher and this is the SEGHAT. I think you will find that we can do a lot of things that the ghost of adventures present can not.”

“Including cunnilingus.” said the Unleasher and my future self’s face bloomed red while he tried to suppress a smile.

I burst out laughing.

The door opened and we arrived in time to see an old man fall down the stairs of a heart attack and croak “Rosebud.”

“Bugger! Wrong universe!” said my future self.

The Unleasher rubbed his back consolingly. “It is all right, you will get it right eventually”

“Excuse me!” I said and I started Oscillating the space above Citizen Kane.

“What is he doing?” asked the Unleasher.

“Solving the most massive plot hole in the greatest film of all time, come on!”

All three of us ran back into the SEGHAT before rushing back out again to watch a version of me, now actually looking 70, fall down the stairs of a heart attack. As he lay dying he croaked. “Jemima.”

“Well, if this is anything like Citizen Kane then Jemima will be the name of his favourite computer or Quantum Oscillator.” I said.

“You name your Quantum Oscillators?” asked the Unleasher.

“Yeah.”

“Kinky.” she looked to my future self and said. “We shall have to try a threesome

sometime?"

He turned to look at me, a mix of fear and joy on his face then said "Actually there is no twist."

We entered and exited the SEGHAT in swift succession to watch a version of me, now looking 50 making love to a woman.

"Bloody hell, he is a goer is he not?" I whispered in surprise.

The Unleasher smiled. "Oh, you have always been a goer."

We hurriedly entered then exited the SEGHAT and we were in a graveyard.

"No." I said.

I did not want to acknowledge the truth but it was undeniable. The greatest love of my other self's life was dead and buried a full century before he.

"How is this possible?" I said. "How can she be outlived by so much?"

"You are not human. You have not been human for almost three decades." said my future self simply.

"I am not a sylph, am I? I am not sure how I could cope being one of the Farsh-nuke's pets."

"Oi!" exclaimed the Unleasher.

"Unleasher, I love you and I am so sorry for what you have been through but no human being on the planet deserves to be a pet."

"And you are not human, or sylph, you are a Logicio, you have yet to go through the training or graduate to regenerative capabilities but you age differently to humans." said my future self.

I did not say anything. I did not need to. He understood me implicitly. I needed time to think. Time to consider my decision. So he let me get changed then dropped me off at the sand pits in my hometown with 42 cans of Redbull sugar free and a caravan.

I had seen so much, learned so much, done so much. I drank and sang, played patience and practised my logicular skills. It occurred to me that if I wanted, I could create the Unleasher again, or the Farsh-nuke, even myself but as much I had that power I did not want to play god. I had learned the lesson of thirty years go and saw life as sacred, not something to be created on a whim to facilitate some plan, only in the direst emergencies.

Eventually I got bored of the drinking and singing, bored of the card games and magic tricks. I just gazed out over the sheer beauty of the woodland and the crater and thought. I had a gift. I had a skill. I was wise beyond my years and I was not human, had not been for some time. Perhaps that is why I played the Doctor so well? Perhaps I was just naturally constantly pinging between dualities? Perhaps I was just a pretentious deluded fool? Perhaps the Farsh-nuke needed me? Perhaps he did not need me? Perhaps I needed him? Perhaps I did not need him?

Eventually I stopped rambling to myself and just flat out demanded of me. “STOP WORRYING ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED! STOP WORRYING ABOUT WHAT HE NEEDS! WHAT DO YOU WANT!? WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO DO WITH THE TIME YOU HAVE GOT LEFT!?”

I slipped and fell down the side of the crater, hearing the echo I answered. “I want love, I want to be missed, I want friends and I want enemies. I want anecdotal mileage and mundane domesticity. I want beauty, hope and an end to darkness.”

Dropping my head, I sighed. “But even the immortal fade away with time. Even if you can not die. Even if you do not age. Even if you always win. Even if you never get bored. One day people will just stop writing stories about you. Even the Doctor dies. He dies so much and so often. Time gets us all in the end. No one can stop it. Not the Doctor, not the Farsh-nuke, not me. We all just turn to dust.”

I looked around myself, I was at the centre of a sandy crater, a dusty amphitheatre and in that moment I fancied I could see every incarnation of the Doctor, the Farsh-nuke and myself watching me from the fringes.

“Everyone dies! Everything meets its end! We are all marching inexorably to our own destruction at the beat of a clock’s metronome! Tick tock goes the clock for all of creation! Tick tock until you die! Until I die! The roads we travel may have varying lengths but they all meet the same destination! Into the void we walk! Into an eternity of blackness where daleks weep and cybermen sleep! Pick your poison friend! How do you want to lose your soul!? You could wait patiently for it!? Stay at home, living your life day

after day until the inevitable happens and you are plunged into a world of darkness!? Or you could run!? Run and fight death at every corner!? You could accept it or fight it!?"

I look down at my feet. "But who am I to wail against the dying of the light? I have lived a good life, fought the good fight and made my own small difference. I do not need to fight death and it no longer scares me, I have felt its icy fingers tug at my heart strings before and I will not run from it. Let it strike me down where I stand."

"The man with no name and nothing to lose. The man who most readily accepts his own death but rejects it of other people. Israphel was right, you are the good man, not I."

I turned to see the Farsh-nuke with his question mark umbrella .

"Do not worry, I am not staying. I came so that you might carry out your promise before it is too late."

"What the fuck are you talking about?"

He stepped aside and I saw the Unleasher crawling on all fours, the perfect pet.

"I see" I said.

We shook hands and we did so he passed me a bottle of pills.

"I shall miss you, we all will." he said before he left in the SEGHAT.

I hugged the Unleasher and muttered. "This last thing I can do for you, Farsh-nuke."

I picked the Unleasher up and tickled her belly, she squirmed like a cat. I removed a single green pill from the bottle, plopped it in her mouth and massaged her throat, causing her to swallow it.

"Well this is kinky." said the Unleasher.

"I always keep my promises." I said.

"But you are so old."

"I'm seventy now."

“You look good on it.”

“You are just saying that.”

“No, I am serious, you look forty.”

“What a marvellous complement. I look twice as old as you.”

The Unleasher stretched out and patted my cheek consolingly. “Oh, do not feel down in the dumps, I was created to be the perfect plaything and besides I am actually old enough to make you seem like a little baby. Now why are we in the sand pits?”

“I am thinking.”

“Thinking about what?”

“Something that does not concern you.”

“Look, you are not Superman, it is not normal for you to head into the middle of nowhere for a think. Something is up isn’t it?”

I frowned. “You do not need to worry yourself with this, you have got ten years with me to look forward to in my past”

“But?”

“But I am an old man now and I have a life here.”

“And future me has been badgering you about travelling with him?”

“Kind of yeah.”

I gave a half smile.

“Well if it is such an issue, do not go with him. I would hate to think that I was forcing you into anything.”

“It is not that easy. I have learned that the Farsh-nuke needs me and the nothingness needs me to be there for him. If I do not go with him people will die.”

“Then go with him.”

“But I can not.”

“Why?”

“Because it is impossible.”

“You are a time traveller whose best friend is known in some parts of the nothingness as the macguffin man. Impossible is nothing.”

“Not this time.”

“Explain the problem to me.”

“The hundredth anniversary of Doctor Who is coming up and I am the serving Doctor. I can not just go buggering off into the nothingness.”

“Have your cake and eat it then? Think about your resources, how can you make the hundredth anniversary the best it has ever been and still allow you to bow out?”

I frowned. “Do you know I think you might be onto something?”

She beamed. “What would you do without me?”

“That is indeed the conundrum I have been trying to work my head around.”

The Unleasher looked over my shoulder and began. “That caravan-?”

“On it!” I said, and via judicious use of the Quantum Oscillator we landed right outside it, I carried her into the caravan and was suddenly reminded of why I had married the Unleasher. I conjured up the clothes she had been wearing when I first met her in the prison and she left with the first Farsh-nuke.

After she had been and gone I went back to drinking, singing and playing cards, my mind working up a solution to my conundrum when there came a knock at my caravan. Curious, I opened the door and found myself looking at a school girl.

“Hello, dad.” She said cheerfully.

“I do sincerely beg your pardon?” I said.

“Oh, it is all right! I know you do not know me yet, may I come in?”

“Umm, sure?”

The school girl strode in and sat down on the sofa bed.

“You have probably got some questions right?” She said.

“Umm, just a few.”

“Well my name is Crystal-”

“What kind of name is Crystal?”

“Mum chose it.”

“Oh.”

“Anyway you conceive me a few years from now on the planet Mescalene circling Poosh. I am the first half Farsh-nuke, half Logicio.”

“You are half Farsh-nuke? God help your teachers and girlfriends!”

She grinned like a cheshire cat. “Oh do not worry I got my morality from you.”

“Considering I married the man who enslaved and turned the human race to cannibalism, I am not entirely sure that is such a good thing.”

“Anyway I heard you were having second thoughts about the whole intergalactic hero lark so I thought I would let you know that you will always have family here and you are welcome any time. You will have a legacy father and you are looking at it.”

“Yes, I am.” I said. “And you know what? I think I have probably made up my mind.”

“Good.”

Crystal got up to leave and I chucked her an energy drink. “Just never become a sylph, okay?”

She hugged me as she left. “Never, Dad.”

She left and I waited until dawn, drinking and singing. I felt good. I felt alive. I felt 50 years younger. I was jigging and dancing, happy as can be. Then a snake slithered down from a tree and spoke to me. It said “Ah! I am glad you have made the right decision now why don’t you celebrate by taking a bite out of an apple from that tree there?”

I shrugged, seemed as good as idea as ever, I walked over to the tree and grabbed the apple. Suddenly I could see people in the crater. There were three mes, me as a child, me at the top of my game while the Farsh-nuke was in prison and future me. There were the three Farsh-nukes and there were the three gods, Notch, Jesus and the Doctor.

“A trilogy of threes.” I muttered. “How very pagan?”

I plucked the apple off the tree and bowled it over arm at the snake as I snarled “GET OFF MY WORLD!”

The snake vanished when the apple hit him and I was aware for a moment of the three Farsh-nukes holding hands around me then I woke up in my bed at home. I cleaned my teeth had a piss and a shit then a shower. I made myself bacon and eggs with a glass of orange juice then I pulled on the suit I wore to conventions left the house and strode towards the shed parked at the corner of my street.

The Farsh-nuke with the Umbrella stepped out, followed by his first self and the Unleasher.

“You have made your decision?” They said as one.

“The ghosts of adventures past, present and future, mother, maiden and crone. You do not seem to have much care for the natural order of things but then that should come as no surprise. You are the Farsh-nuke! I am an actor, a man who plays the Doctor, your companion and your husband. I am the man who hides behind the name of Doctor, the man who hides behind the Farsh-nuke and the man with no name and nothing to lose. You are my mirror Farsh-nuke and when we are apart we lose ourselves. I shall help you but first you must help me, are you willing to make this compromise?”

“I am.” They said as one.

“Then huddle around children because I have a cunning plan.” I said.

We watched the centenary of Doctor Who together. In the story my Doctor is going mad from the Valeyard inside his head but he is visited by three ghosts. Derek and the Farsh-nuke played the roles of eleventh and seventh Doctors respectively, while one of the more recently departed Doctors joined in as well. There are also two future Doctors, one evil, one good. The Doctors help my character realise where he is going wrong and he kills himself in order to create the good Doctor and save thousands of lives.

We were all quite chuffed by how it turned out actually then you walked in, my grand daughter Susan. You said you wanted to know what I'd been through so I wrote this for you. I hope it is a good Christmas present. It is funny really but in the absence of any other name, my character name sort of stuck. Doctor Who. That is who I am.

Oh and I had a word with the Unleasher's duplicate, the first one, the one married to Derek. She gave me permission to include some of her blog entries to fill in the gaps.

That is about it really, Susan. The man with no name and the man with many names flying off to see and save the nothingness. I hope it was an enjoyable read and remember I shall come back. Yes, I shall come back. Until then, there must be no regrets, no tears, no anxieties. Just go forward in all your beliefs and prove to me that I am not mistaken in mine. Goodbye Susan. Goodbye my dear.

Sorry, just one last quote for the road eh? No, I shall come back but more importantly I shall be out there living my days for you, for everyone I know and everyone in the human race, everyone that can think. It is my job to keep the nothingness safe, to keep the universe safe, so think of me as you read this book, think of the weary traveller and the impossible man saving worlds together because I do not believe that we will ever really stop now that we have started. I wish you the best of luck in your home life and in your work life. Now I must be off as the Farsh-nuke says we have just landed in a city of diamonds.

Epilogue

When the end of the Great Septagonoid War approached the Farsh-nuke in this story applied to be part of the advance guard in the new dimension Farsh-nukes would be sent to after the end of the Great Septagonoid War. It took time but he told his friends and family and everyone packed up and moved ahead to start up life in the new dimension. The Unleasher Duplicates moved across as part of the advance guard aswell with Derek and his family being involved in the move.

In this new dimension the family set up a farm and a theater production company. The aged heroes were able to retire in peace and provided stability and authority in the chaos that followed the war ending.

The book that was written for Susan was circulated among the different farms to help children understand what life was like for the Farsh-nukes before the Great Septagonoid War ended and the war was destroyed.

Cuttings of symphs were routinely shared around in markets and pubs.

The Farsh-nuke, Doctor William as he was now called in this dimension, bought over cuttings of beautiful young women who had come across with their Farsh-nukes. Sammy, Cassy, Amy, Calisto, Britney, Candi, Lucy and Daniella.

There had been some very harsh words exchanged but the new cuttings were quick to adapt to their new lives. Daniella explained that she arrived in the dimension after the war ended because of her close relationship with Lucy. She impressed the Farsh-nuke's husband so much that she and her girlfriend Lucy became his apprentices to a new Logicio School within the Septagonoid dimension.

The Farsh-nuke – Doctor William - soon had the cuttings happily submitting to be his harem.

Daniella and Lucy seduced his husband and the Unleasher in response.

Late one night after their respective submissive women had been put to bed Doctor Wiilliam and his husband went to their drawing room for a nightcap.

"So…" said Doctor William as he poured. "You and your apprentices?"

"Yep."

"Good fucks I take it?" asked Doctor William curiously.

"Amazing fucks." said his husband with a nod.

Doctor William nodded thoughtfully.

"Such pretty little cries. You should watch sometime?"

“I will. I certainly will.” said Doctor William then he knocked back his drink.

His husband nodded then sipped his drink.

Doctor William poured more whisky into his glass and topped his husband up.

“So…” Doctor William puffed out his cheeks and let out a long slow sigh.

“I married you, William, I travelled the multiverse with you and I moved to another dimension to continue being with you. I’ve been trying to be patient, to let you move at your own pace but it’s like you keep needing to distract yourself from the reality of our situation and there’s no war or alien invaders you find beautiful women who aren’t yourself from somewhere so you can bury yourself in breasts and pussy.”

“I love you, Geoff. I’ve loved you for so long. I didn’t need to become the Unleasher to fall in love with you, though that certainly released my inhibitions. I’ve never stopped loving you either and I miss having you inside me and in charge of me, telling me what to do.”

Geoff kissed Doctor William then pulled back and smiled. “My name Geoff Pottershark and I am your husband, Doctor William Dickson Wright, I have never stopped loving you. Now come on, it’s time yopu felt me inside of you one again.”

Doctor William smirked. “Yes, Master.”

Afterword

My name is Alex Jahans and this story was created during my first NaNoWriMo in 2011 then touched up in early March 2021 In hindsight this is a mess, a hideous, weird, horrific mess but I think perhaps gloriously so. As my first NaNoWriMo I had to reload it though I have fixed a lot of typos, tense errors and lines of writing that were to problematic to be left in. I also added the Epilogue since I removed so much that I needed to add words back in so it crossed the 50k word threshold. It also felt weird to give a happy ending without addressing what happens after all the Farsh-nukes are trapped in another Dimension.

Sarah is implied to have been captured by a version of the Farsh-nuke from another that we first encounter having regenerated. To be honest the Doctor Who slant and endless quotes are unnecessary but they stopped me screaming when I had this, a script and a short story to write. Oh and I did not exactly make it clear but Sarah stays on the

SEGHAT after Geoff leaves it to start off the events of the Christmas Carol slant and she is still there when he comes back.